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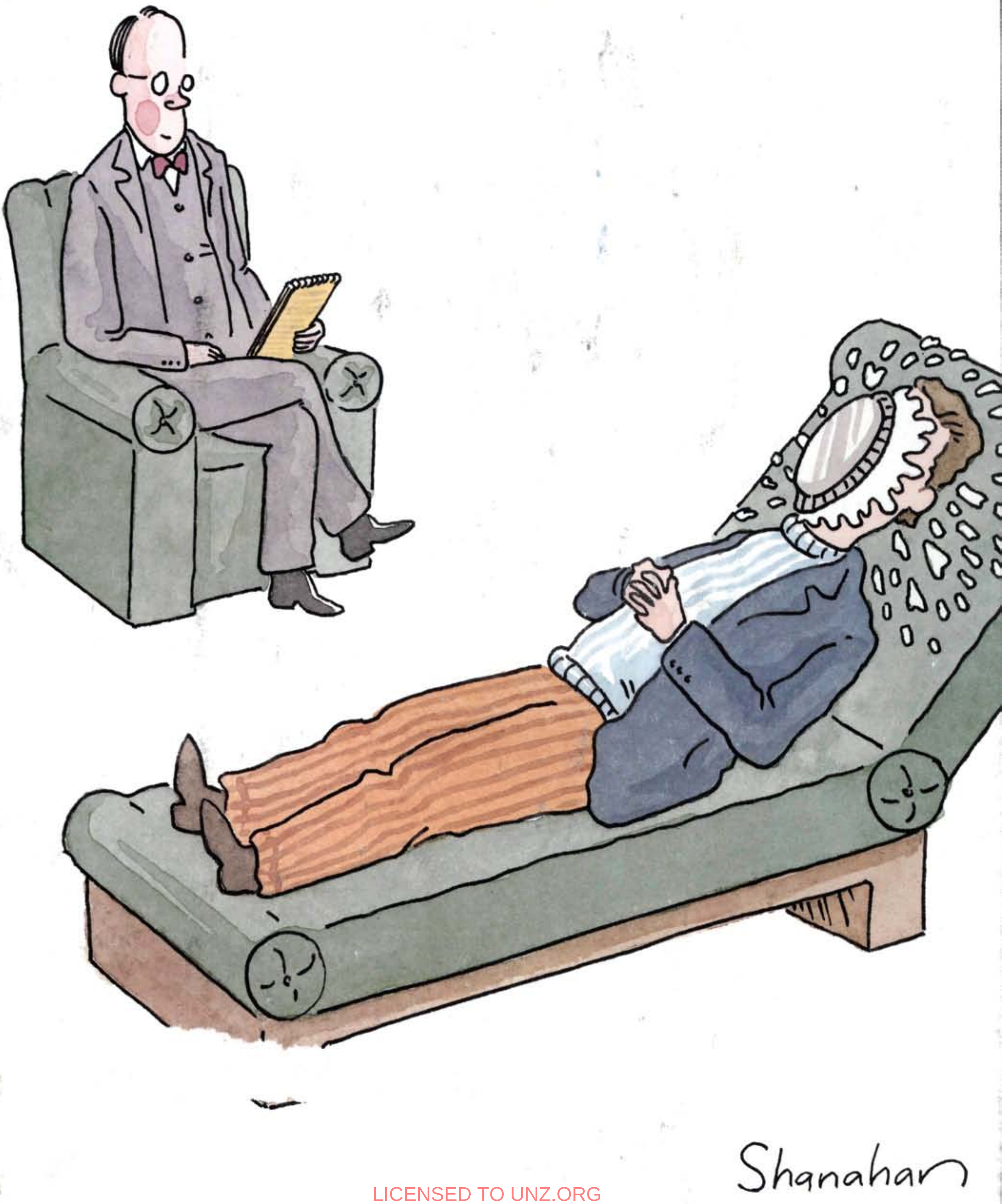

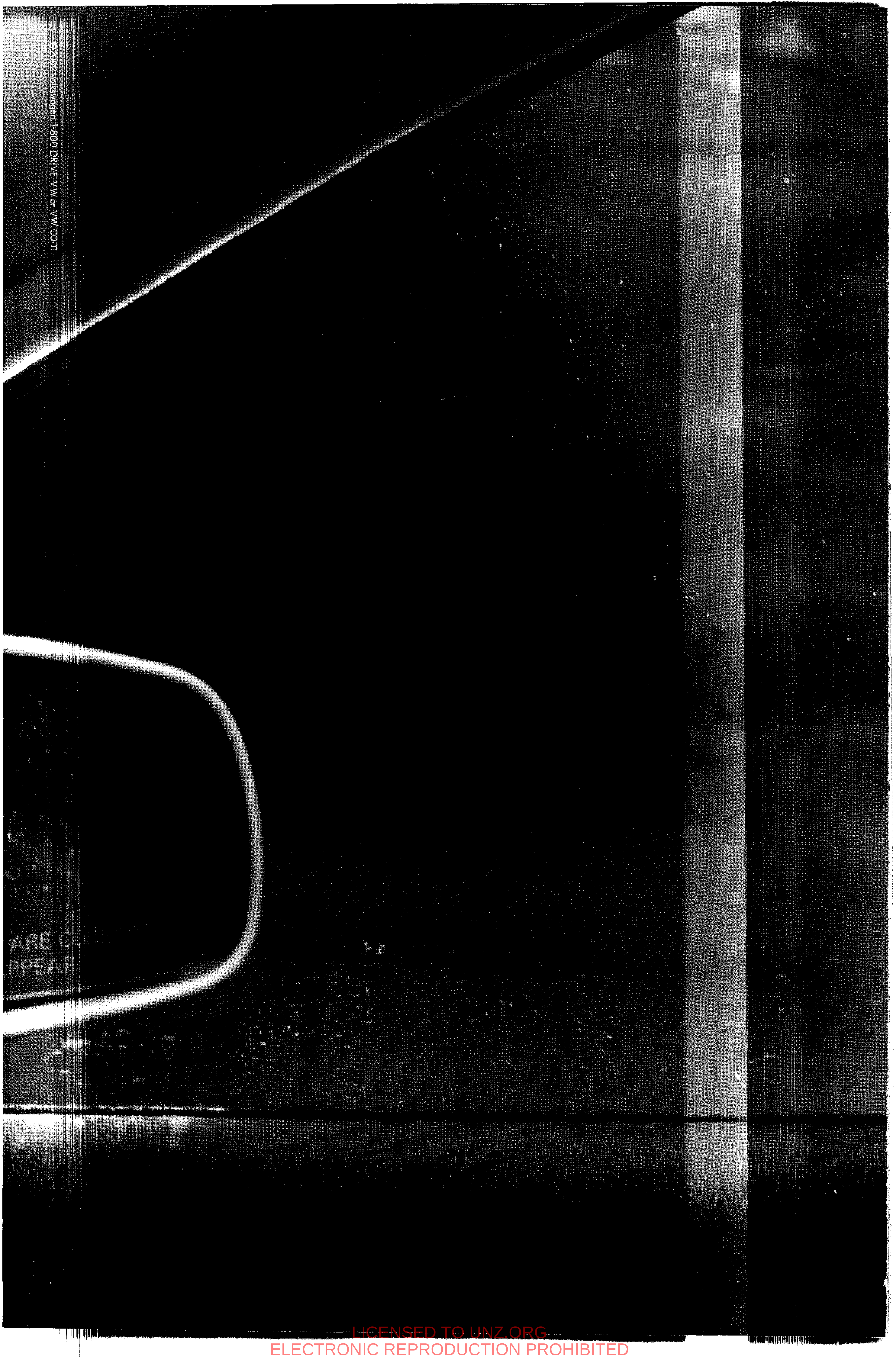
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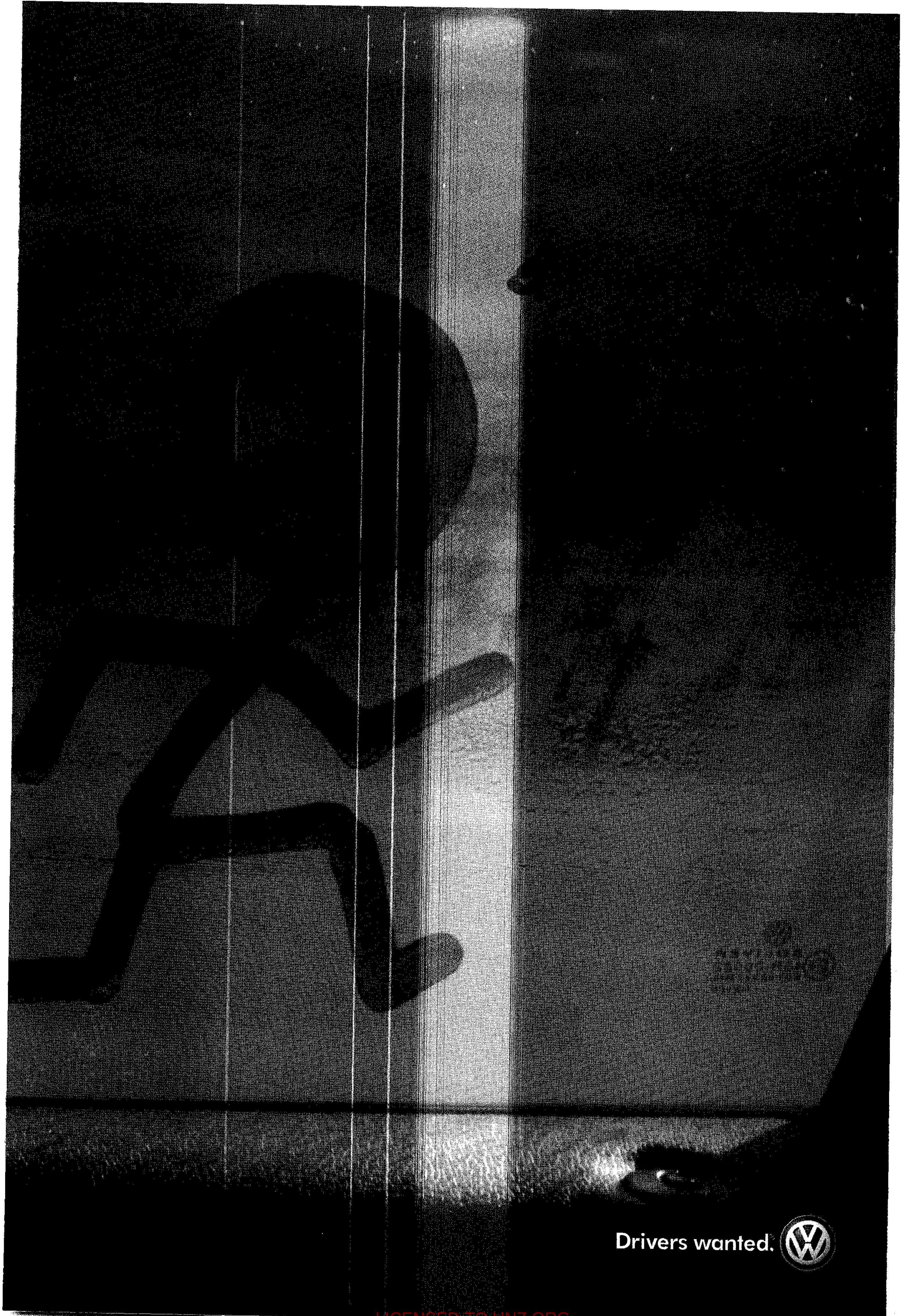
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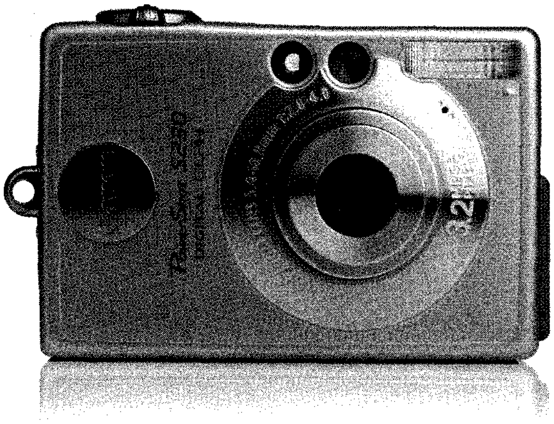

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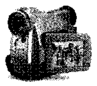

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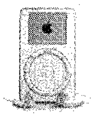

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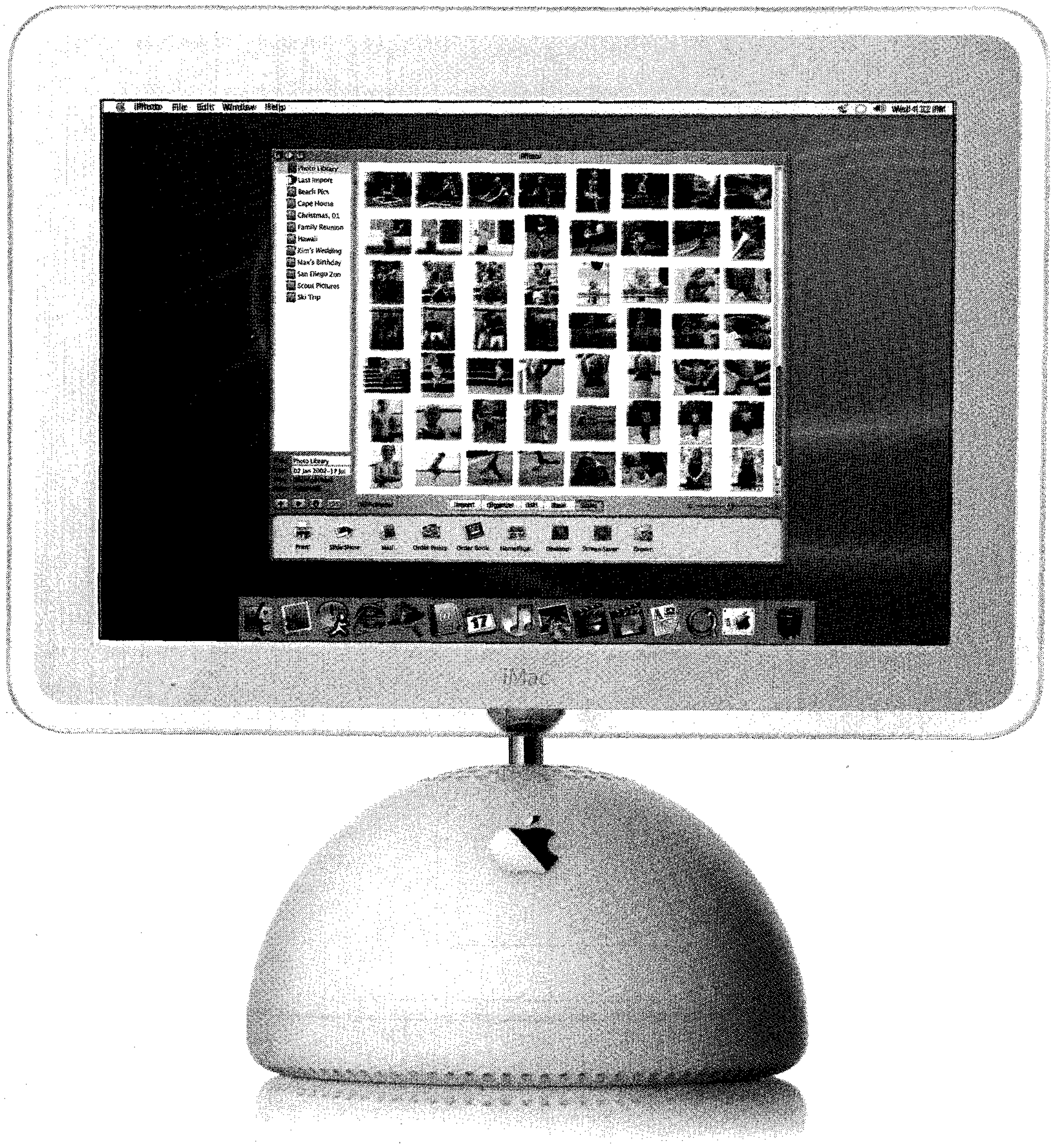
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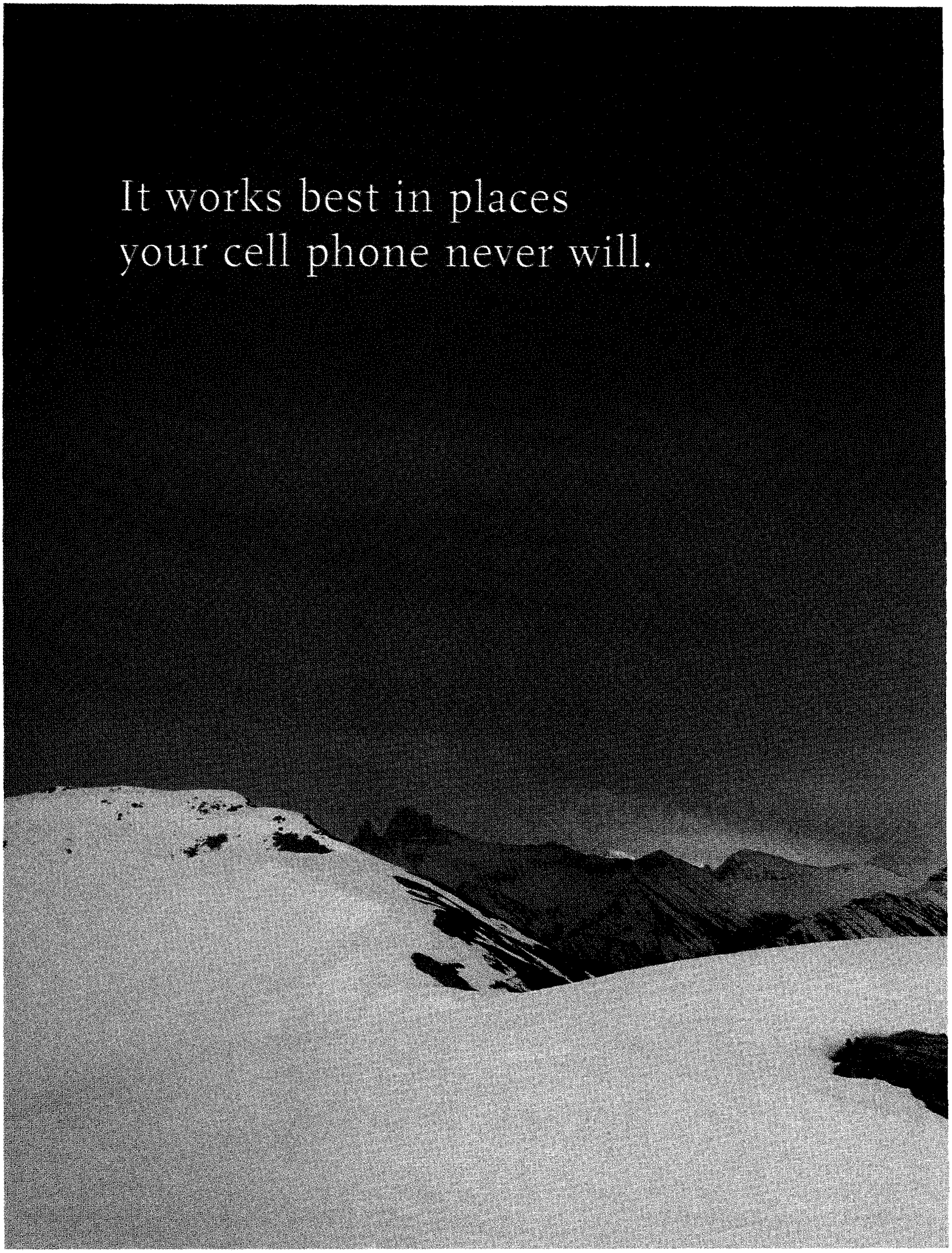
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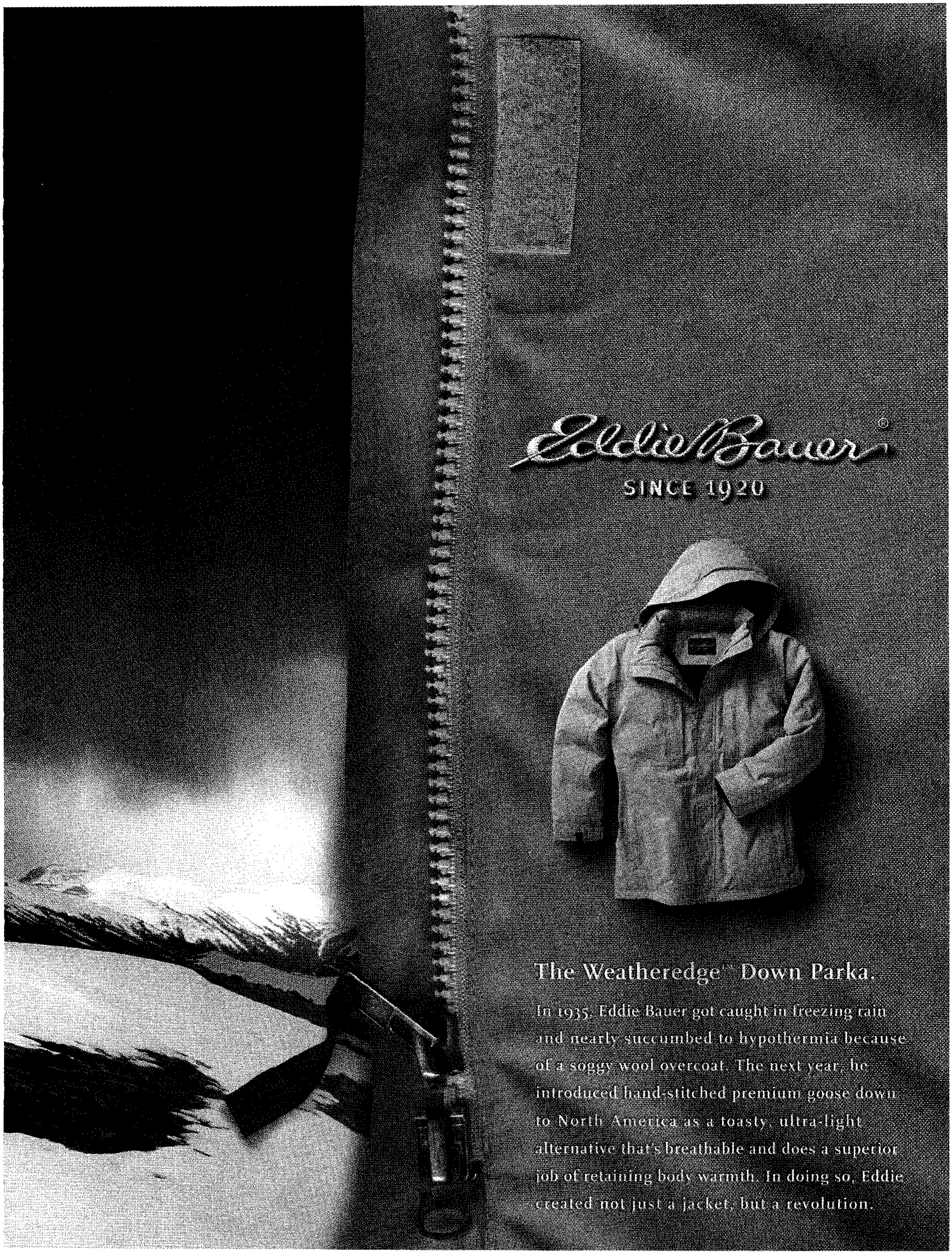

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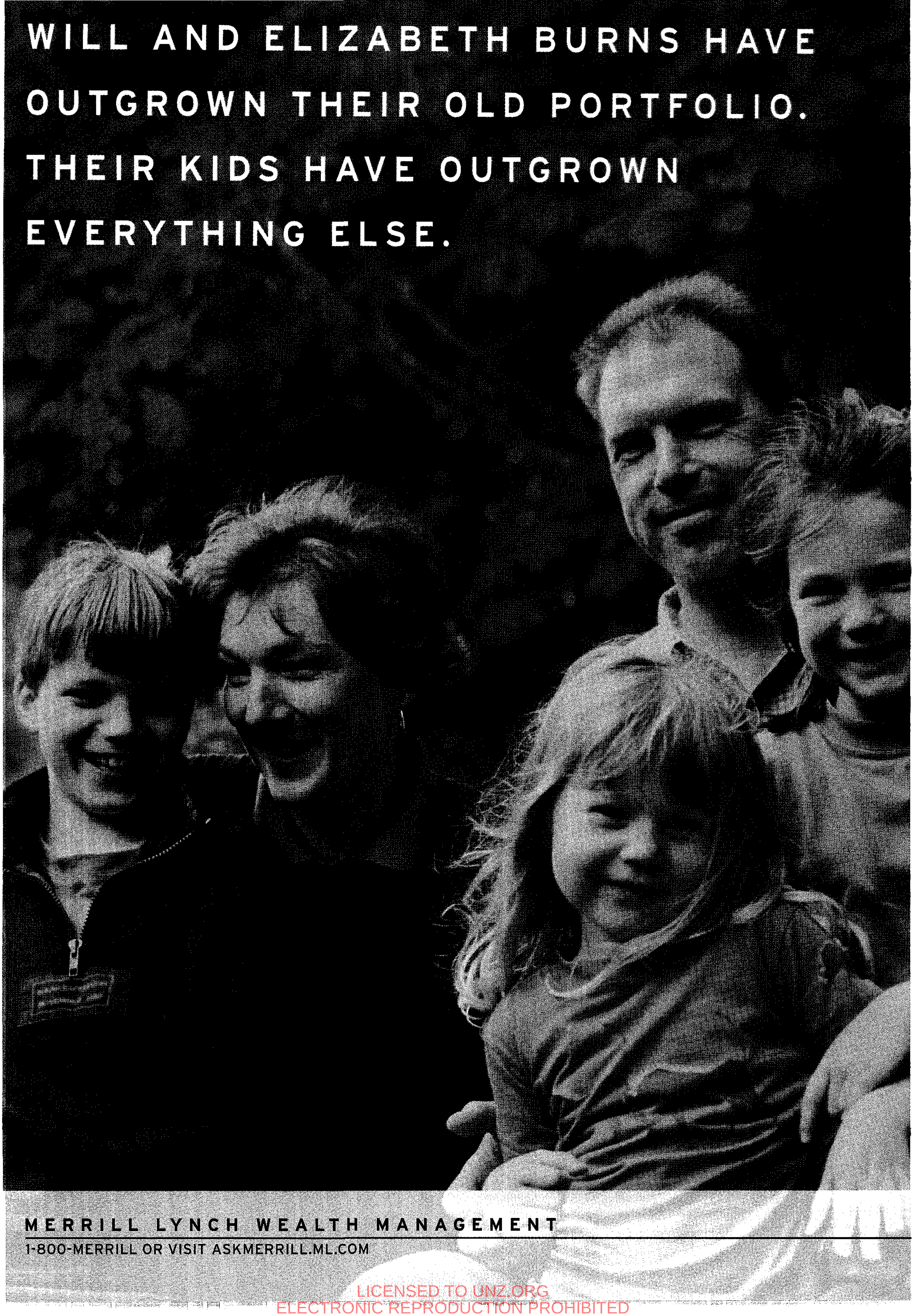
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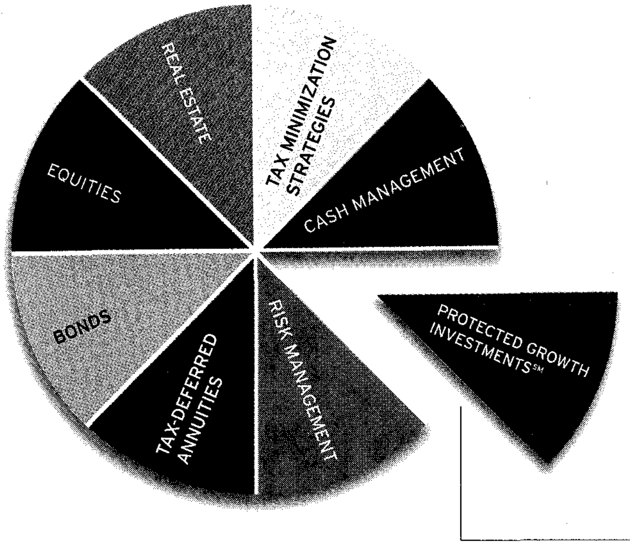
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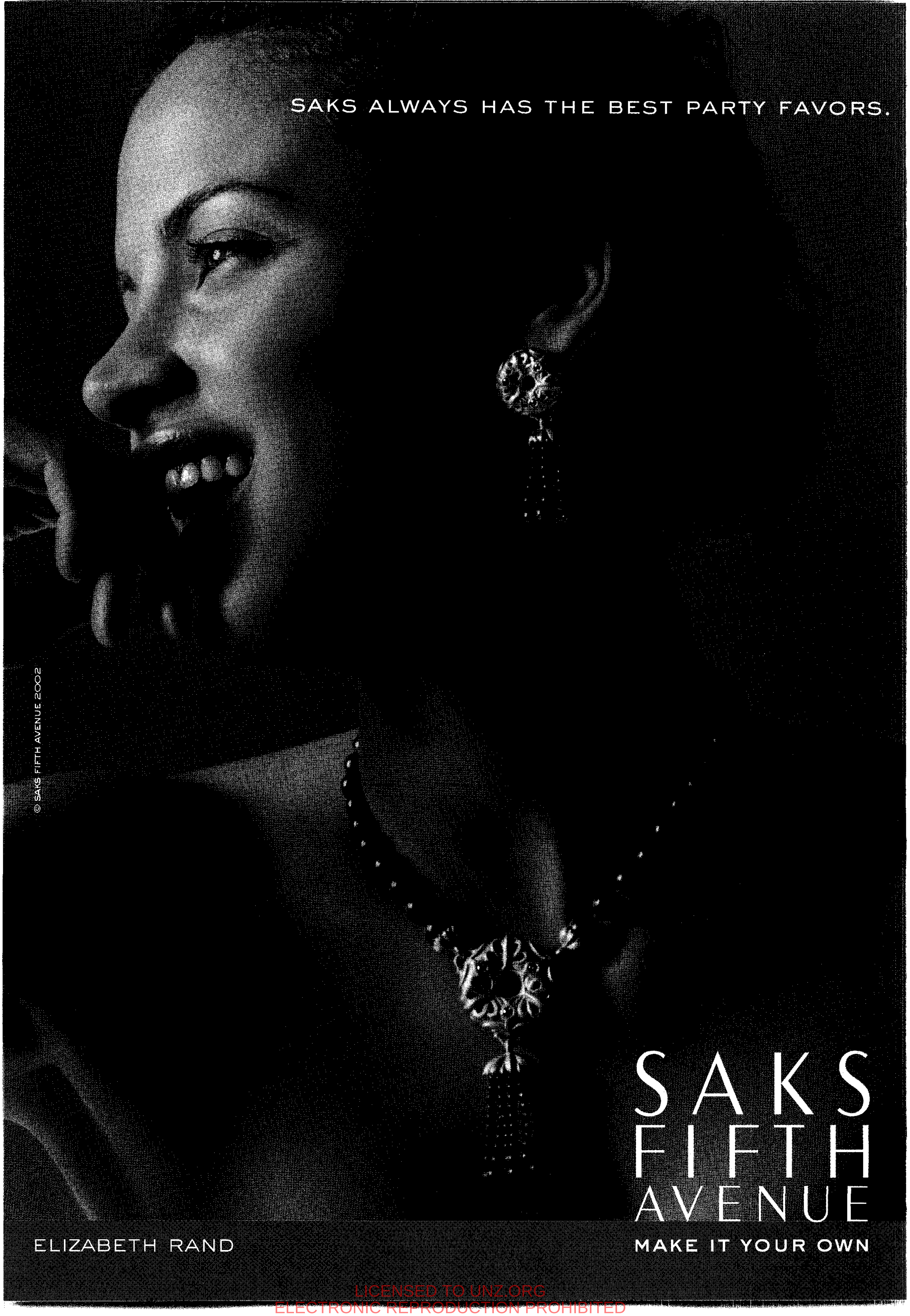
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THE CARTOON ISSUE

NOVEMBER 11, 2002

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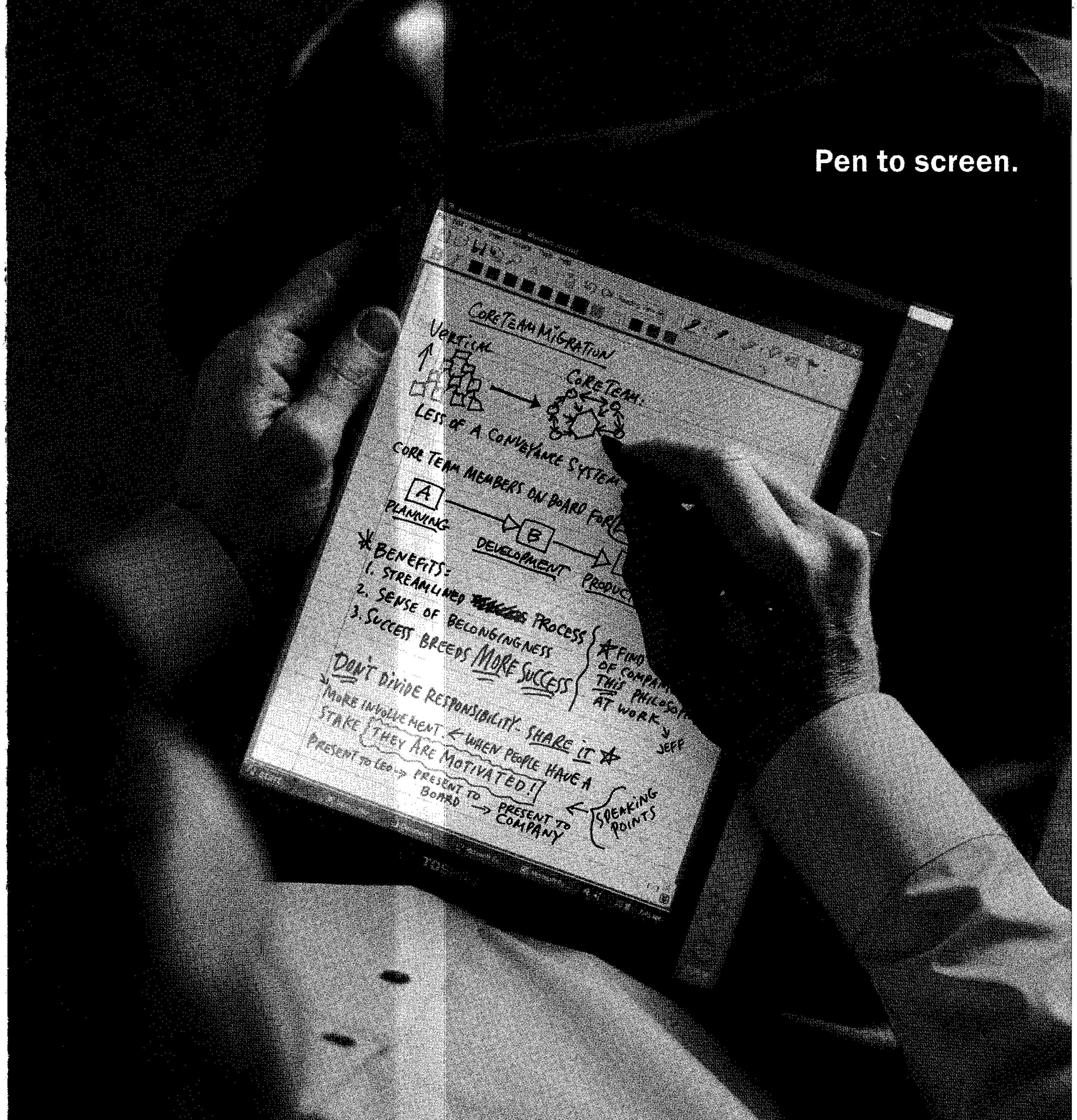
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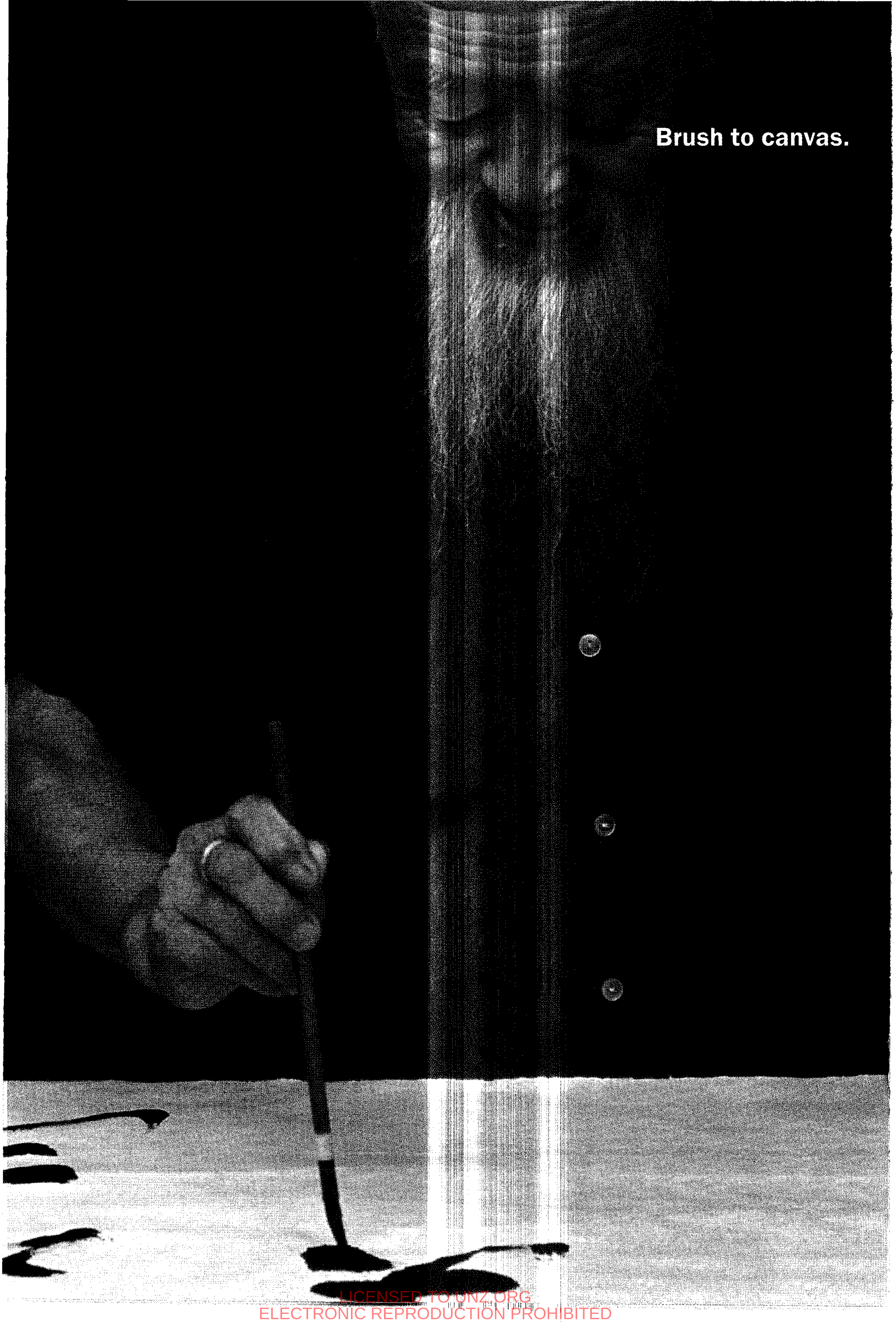

Brush to canvas.

CONTRIBUTORS

Tad Friend (The Talk of the Town, p. 72; "What's So Funny?," p. 78) is a staff writer and the author of "Lost in Mongolia."

Woody Allen (Casual, p. 97) has been contributing to the magazine for many years.

Roz Chast (Illustration, p. 40; Cartoon, p. 160) has published several books of illustrations, including, most recently, "Weird and Wonderful Words."

John Cassidy ("The Next Crash," p. 123) writes about business and economics for the magazine.

Charles Barsotti (Cartoon, p. 156) has been a contributor since 1962. "The Essential Charles Barsotti" is a biography and an anthology of his work.

Danny Shanahan (Cover) is having an exhibition of his work at Bard College this month.

Mark Bowden ("Attila's Headset," p. 100) is the author of "Bringing the Heat," "Black Hawk Down," and, most recently, "Finders Keepers."

Helen E. Hokinson (Cartoons, pp. 164, 165), whose first drawing was published in the July 4, 1925, issue of the magazine, was a regular contributor until her death, in 1949.

Liza Donnelly ("Leading Ladies," p. 165) is currently working on a book about women cartoonists of *The New Yorker.*

John Updike (Books, p. 190) writes fiction and criticism for the magazine. His new novel, "Seek My Face," has just been published.

Chris Ware (Situation Comedy, p. 166) is the author of "Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth."

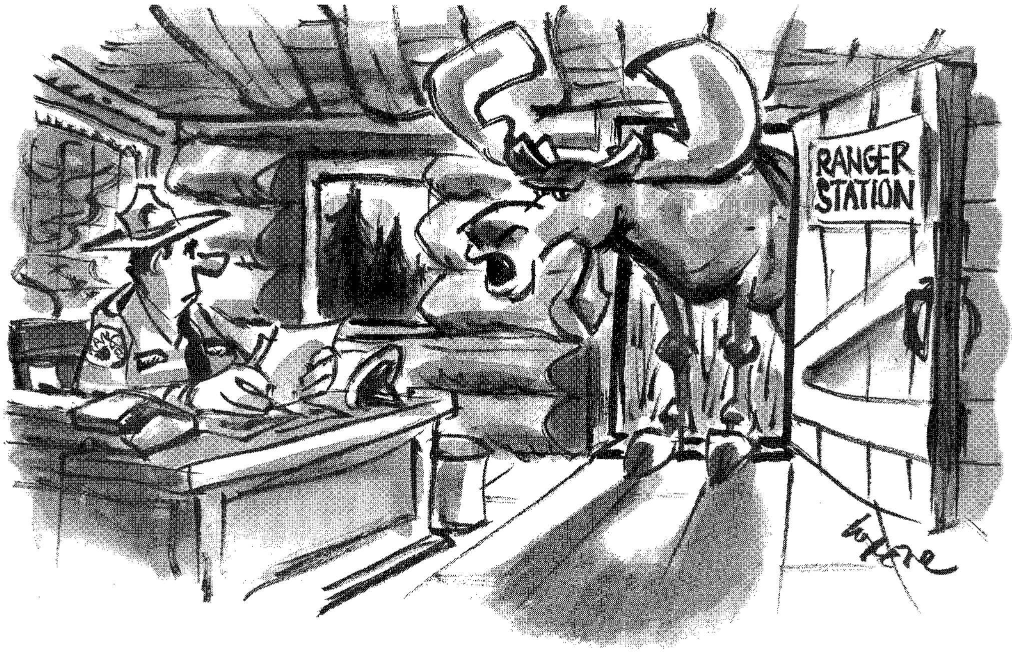
T. Coraghessan Boyle (Fiction, p. 130) has written six collections of stories and nine novels, including "Drop City," which will be published in February.

Joan Acocella (Books, p. 184) writes about literature and dance for the magazine. Her book "Willa Cather and the Politics of Criticism" is now out in paperback.

Adam Gopnik (A Critic at Large, p. 174) is a staff writer and the author of "Paris to the Moon."

Edward Koren (Cartoon, p. 160; spot drawings throughout) will have an exhibition of his work at the Virginia Lynch Gallery, in Tiverton, Rhode Island, in December.

Mick Stevens (Illustration, p. 60; Cartoon, p. 154; The Back Page, p. 198) has been drawing cartoons for *The New Yorker* for more than thirty years. ♦



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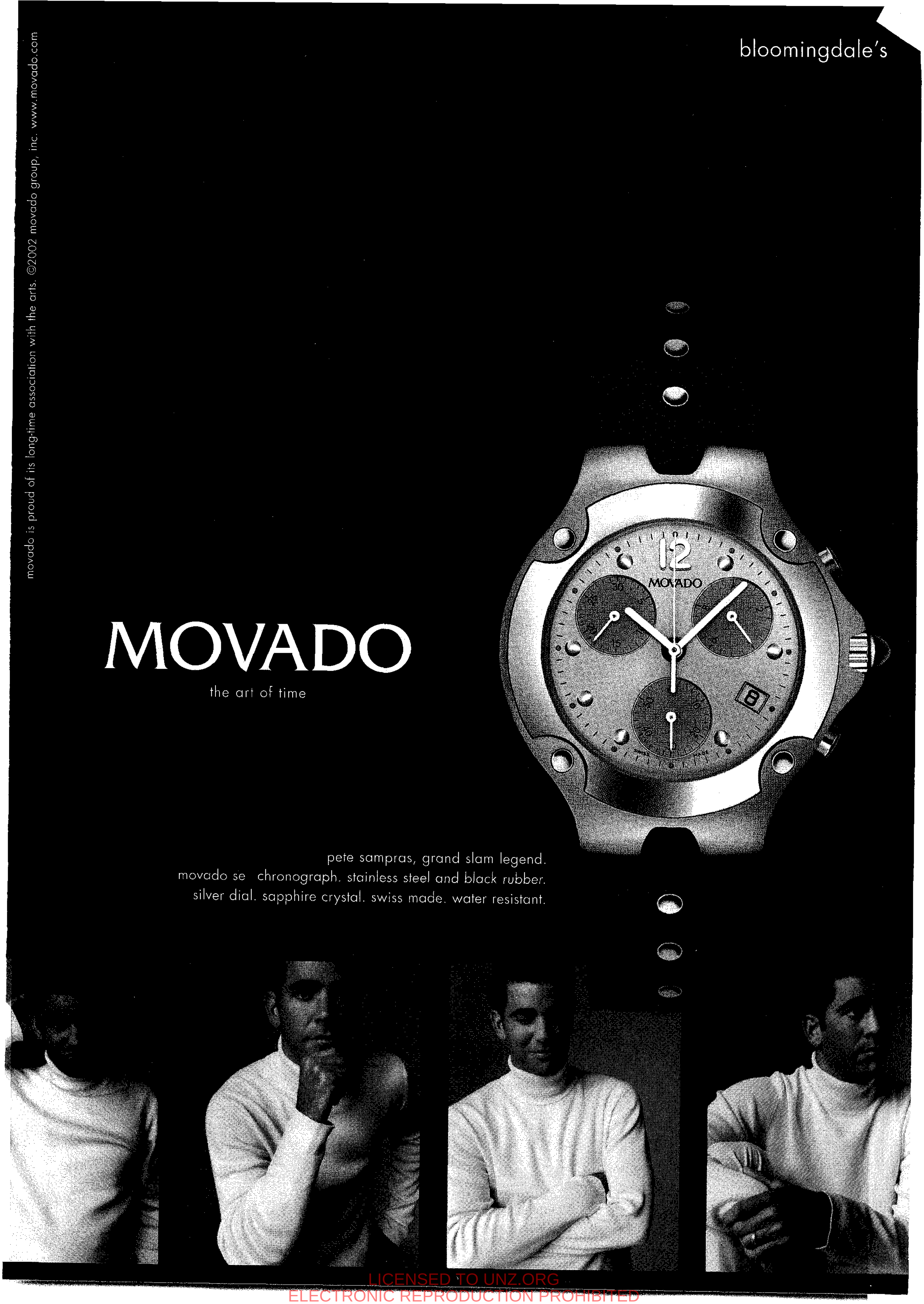

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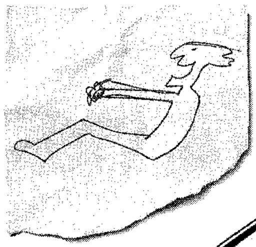

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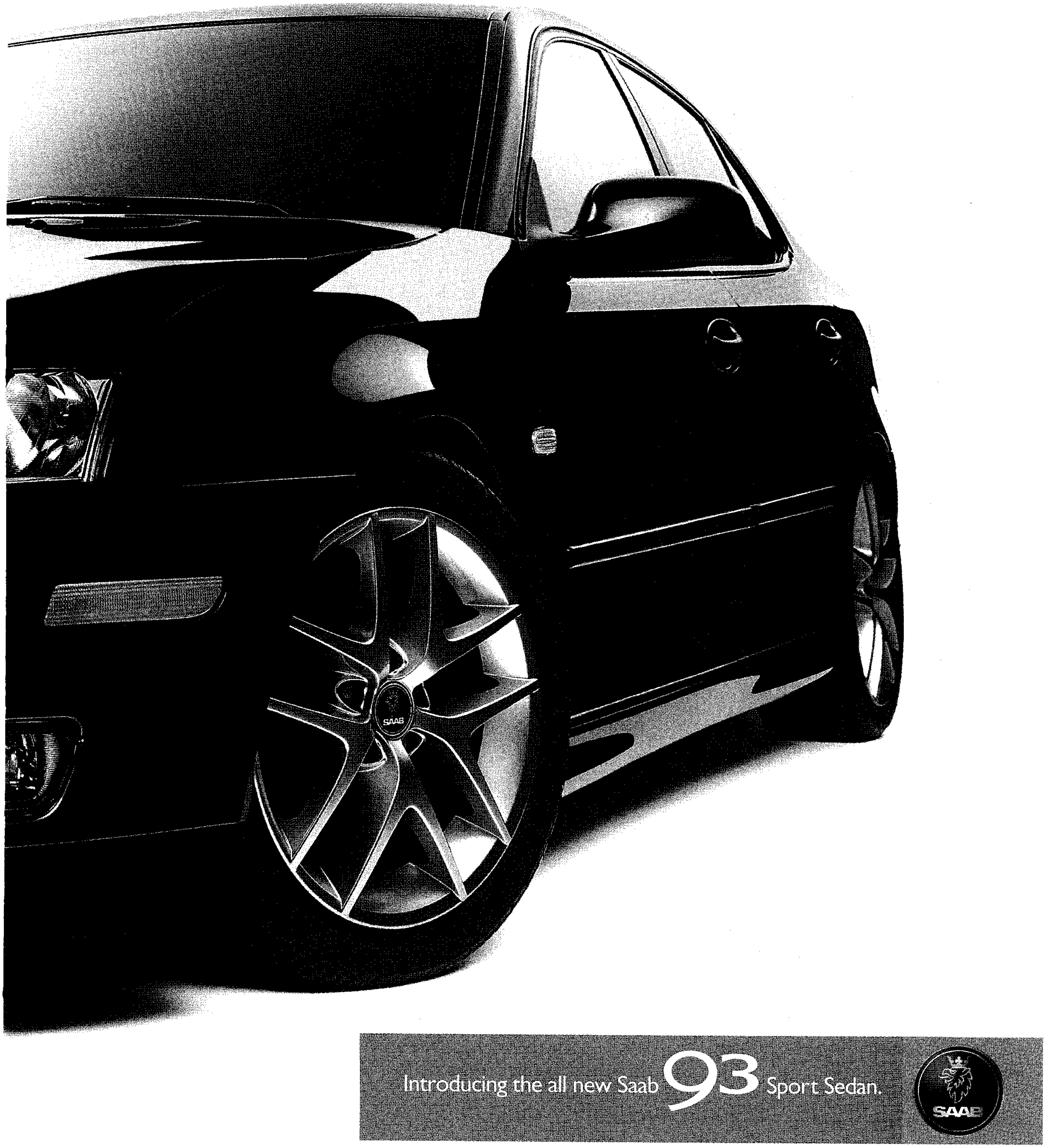
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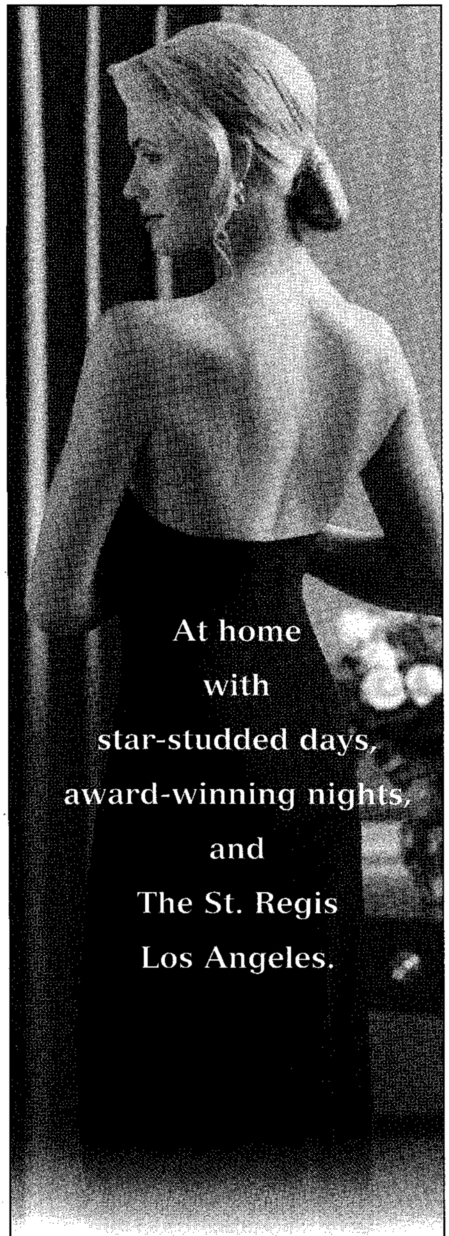

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TAKING ON AMERICA

Both Hendrik Hertzberg and Fareed Zakaria offer valuable ruminations on the new United States foreign-policy doctrine (The Talk of the Town and "Our Way," October 14th & 21st). In sum, the issues they raise boil down to two fundamental questions. First, by positing permanent military superiority as the central fact (not just a corollary) of its engagement with the rest of the planet, hasn't America set itself up as the champion that jealous, reckless, and ambitious powers will want to take down? (Think of Gregory Peck in "The Gunfighter.") Isn't this a recipe for permanent conflict—even if America always wins—rather than for permanent peace? Second, while it seems reasonable now to view the United States as an ideal model of free-market liberalism, the Bush doctrine makes no provisions for any objective assessments of how the nation is measuring up to that ideal. World peace and justice do now seem more achievable under America's hegemony than anyone else's; but is there a peace-and-justice referee other than itself that the United States is willing to respect? And, if not, can it learn to judge its impact on the rest of the world by any lights but its own?

George Case
Burnaby, B.C.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISER

Condoleezza Rice, the national-security adviser, projects a dogged certainty in her discussions with Nicholas Lemann that, in someone at her level of authority, is truly frightening ("Without a Doubt," October 14th & 21st). This mind-set most likely derives from her having spent nearly all her career in the academy. As with so many academics, she seems to find ideas more real than people. It's worth remembering that the last time we had such mad certainty inflicted upon us by "the best and the brightest" we were led into the quagmire of Vietnam.

Vaughn A. Carney
Stowe, Vt.

Lemann's comparison of Rice to McGeorge Bundy, who served as the national-security adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, is unfortunate. As Stanford's provost, Rice worked to reverse progress for minorities and women on campus; Bundy, as Harvard's dean, helped to initiate the recruitment of black students to the university. Rice, for all her talent, is where she is today in part because powerful organizations like Stanford and Chevron and the former and current Bush Administrations knew that they could use her to deflect criticism of their policies and practices.

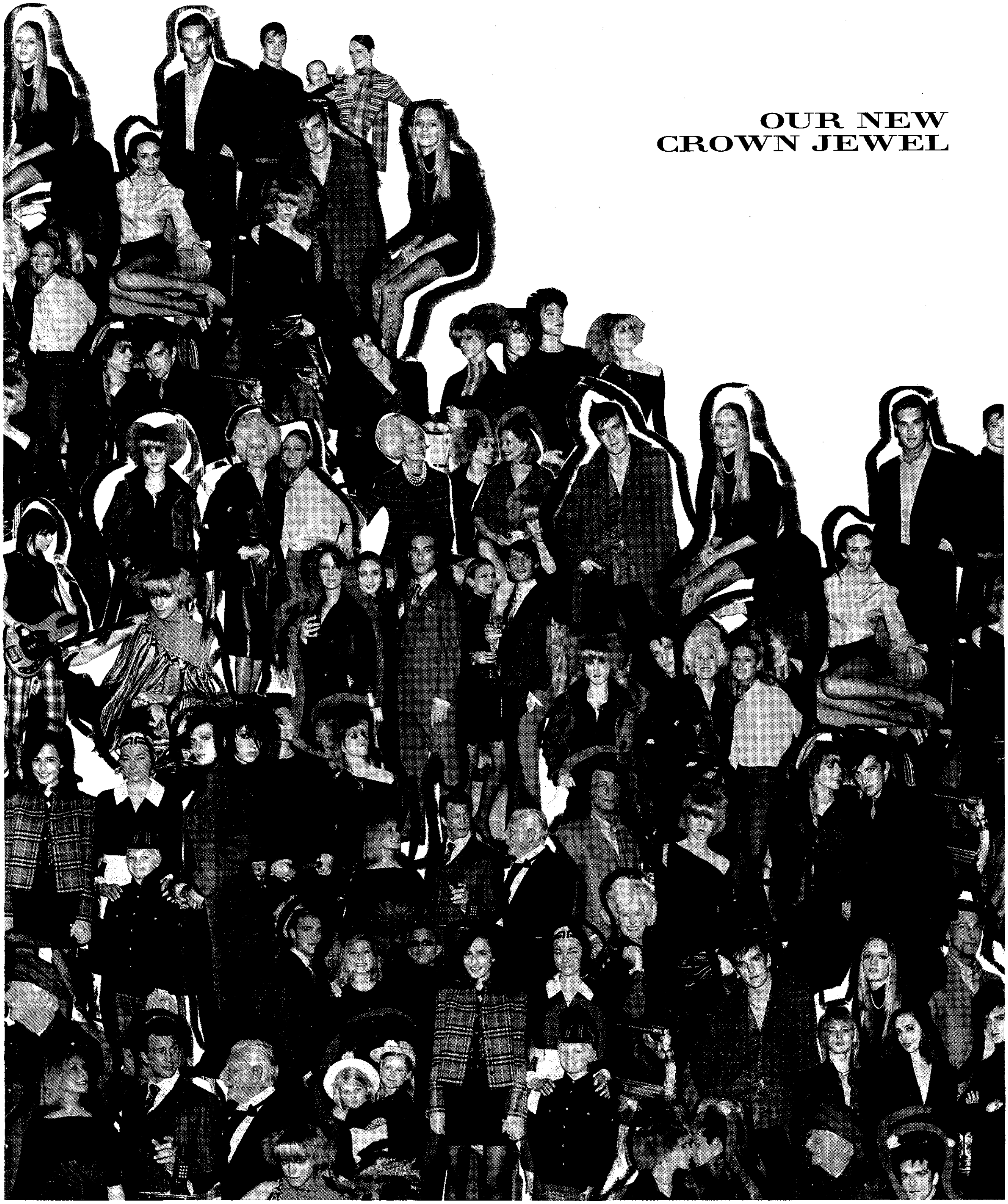
Jeffrey C. Clark
Brooklyn, N.Y.

I was bewildered by Rice's assertion, in her talk with Lemann, that "as a student of this business" she knows that "intelligence estimates almost always underestimate capabilities. They rarely overestimate capabilities, in terms of time lines." What, then, should other students of the business make of, among other things, the much feared, but ultimately illusory, "missile gap" of the late nineteen-fifties; the "imminent"—but never quite materializing—cascade of dominoes falling to Communism in the nineteen-sixties and seventies; and, of course, the "juggernaut" that was the Soviet Union in the eighties but that crumbled, unexpectedly, so soon thereafter?

Kelly Greenhill
Research Fellow, Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

CUBA AND BEYOND

William Finnegan's article on Assistant Secretary of State Otto Reich might have been a useful overview of the problems facing the Western Hemisphere ("Castro's Shadow," October 14th & 21st). Instead, it was a recounting of fifteen-year-old innuendo and half-truths that dogged Ambassador Reich nearly two years ago, when he was nominated to his post by President Bush. There is little point in rebutting the tired laundry list of unfair charges. President Bush,



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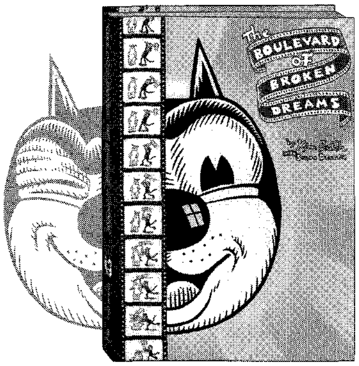
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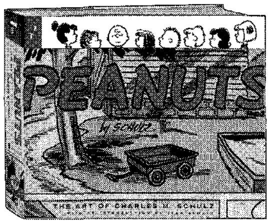
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Secretary of State Powell, and three previous Secretaries of State have already done so eloquently. But I do want to take issue with Finnegan's assertion that Ambassador Reich is fixated on Cuba to the detriment of our bilateral relations with other countries in the region. Ambassador Reich is justifiably proud of his heritage and the hardships faced by his family after Castro's takeover in 1959, but his focus covers the range of issues facing the region, and he is committed to cultivating close ties with our partners throughout the hemisphere. It was this broad view that Ambassador Reich sought to share in his interview. Finnegan, by not focussing on the important substance of U.S.-Latin American relations, has done a disservice both to his readers and to Ambassador Reich.

Charles Barclay
Spokesman, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Department of State
Washington, D.C.

STUBBORN GERMANS

There is an element of truth in Jane Kramer's criticism of German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's use of anti-American sentiment in his reëlection campaign (The Talk of the Town, October 7th). However, the point that the Bush Administration has missed is that America's allies (and Germany counts itself as one of them) are willing to help make this world a safer place but are not ready to be dictated to. Schröder is popular because he has demonstrated that he has the very thing that Bush has been demanding of the international community—backbone.

John Ryan
Frankfurt, Germany

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

Michael Powell, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, defends his position on spectrum analysis to Nicholas Lemann by offering an analogy to real estate: "We don't seize all the land in the United States and say 'the government will issue licenses to use land'" ("The Chairman," October 7th). But the European powers did just that when they claimed the Americas for their respective crowns. The Colonies, and, later, the United States, completed the systematic dispossession of the American Indians of their lands, which were then made available to settlers through land grants and homesteading. Even today, more than half the land in the Western United States is owned by the federal government (in some Western states, it owns more than eighty per cent). The government may not issue "licenses," but it (and its predecessors) certainly allocated the lands of the United States.

Alan Downer
Director, Historic Preservation Department, Navajo Nation
Window Rock, Ariz.

THE OTHER JANE ADDAMS

In his Comment on Jimmy Carter's Nobel Peace Prize, Hendrik Hertzberg identifies Jane Addams, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, as a "pioneering social worker" who "labored on behalf of the poor" (The Talk of the Town, October 28th). True enough, but Addams, the first American woman to win the prize, was not only a social worker but the premier woman peace activist of her generation. In 1915, she travelled to The Hague to chair a conference of women looking for ways to stop the First World War from spreading, and met with European politicians to try to broker peace. Once the war ended, in 1919, she and Emily Greene Balch, another American Nobel Peace laureate, co-founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom with a group of women from both sides of the conflict (Addams served as the organization's first president). Like Carter, Addams always made the connection between social justice and peace. Too often, Addams is remembered for her social work and not her peace work. Perhaps this is because she, like Jimmy Carter, found societal approval for her efforts on behalf of poor people but was roundly derided for those on behalf of peace at the time she undertook them.

Genie Silver
Wynnewood, Pa.

•

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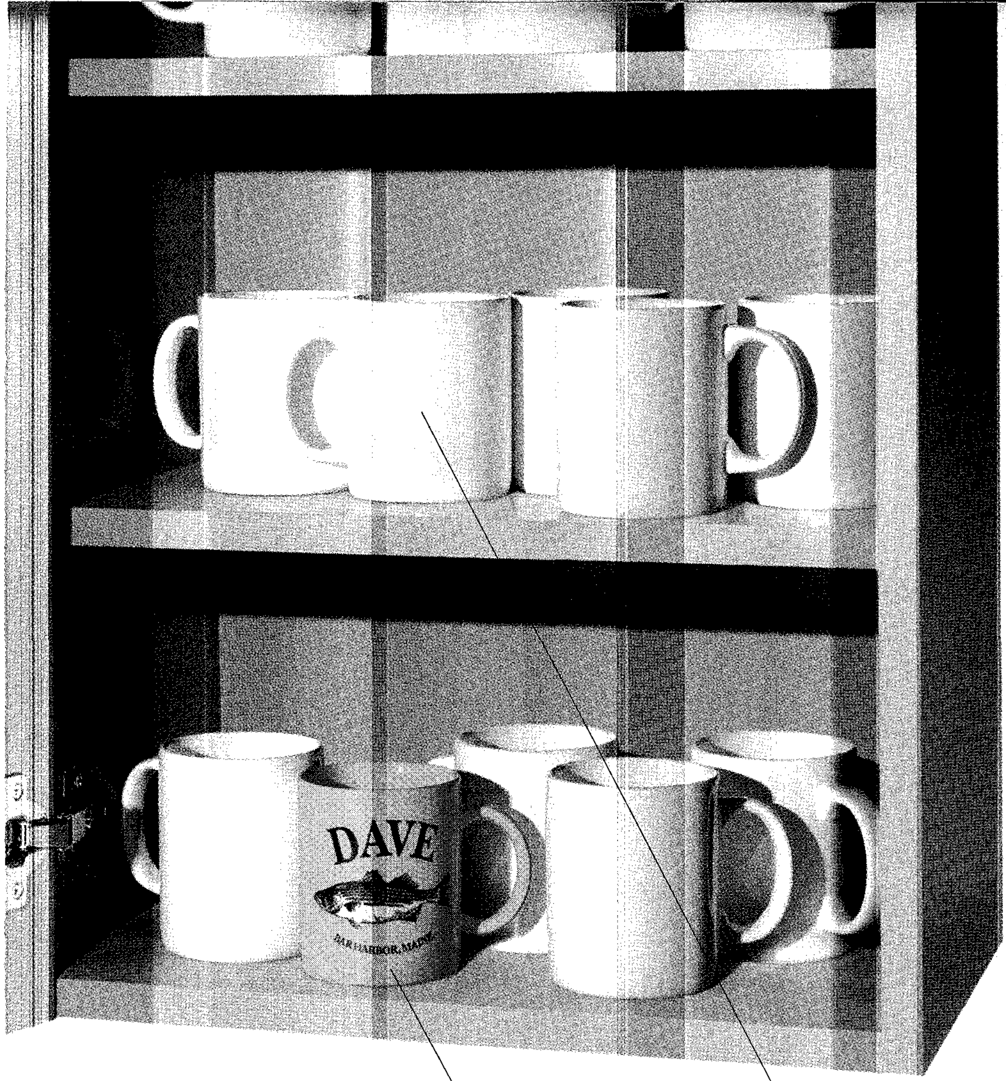

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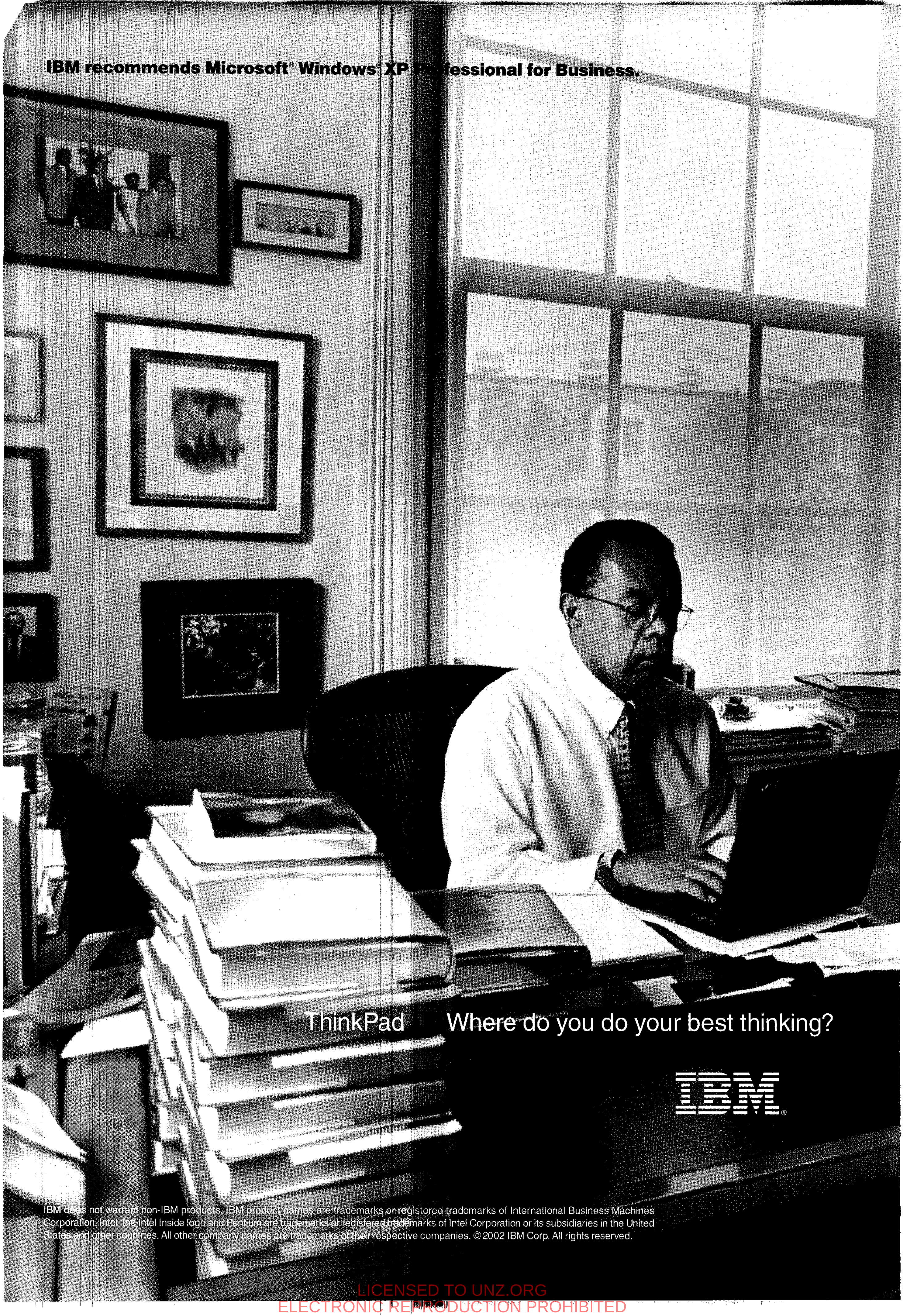
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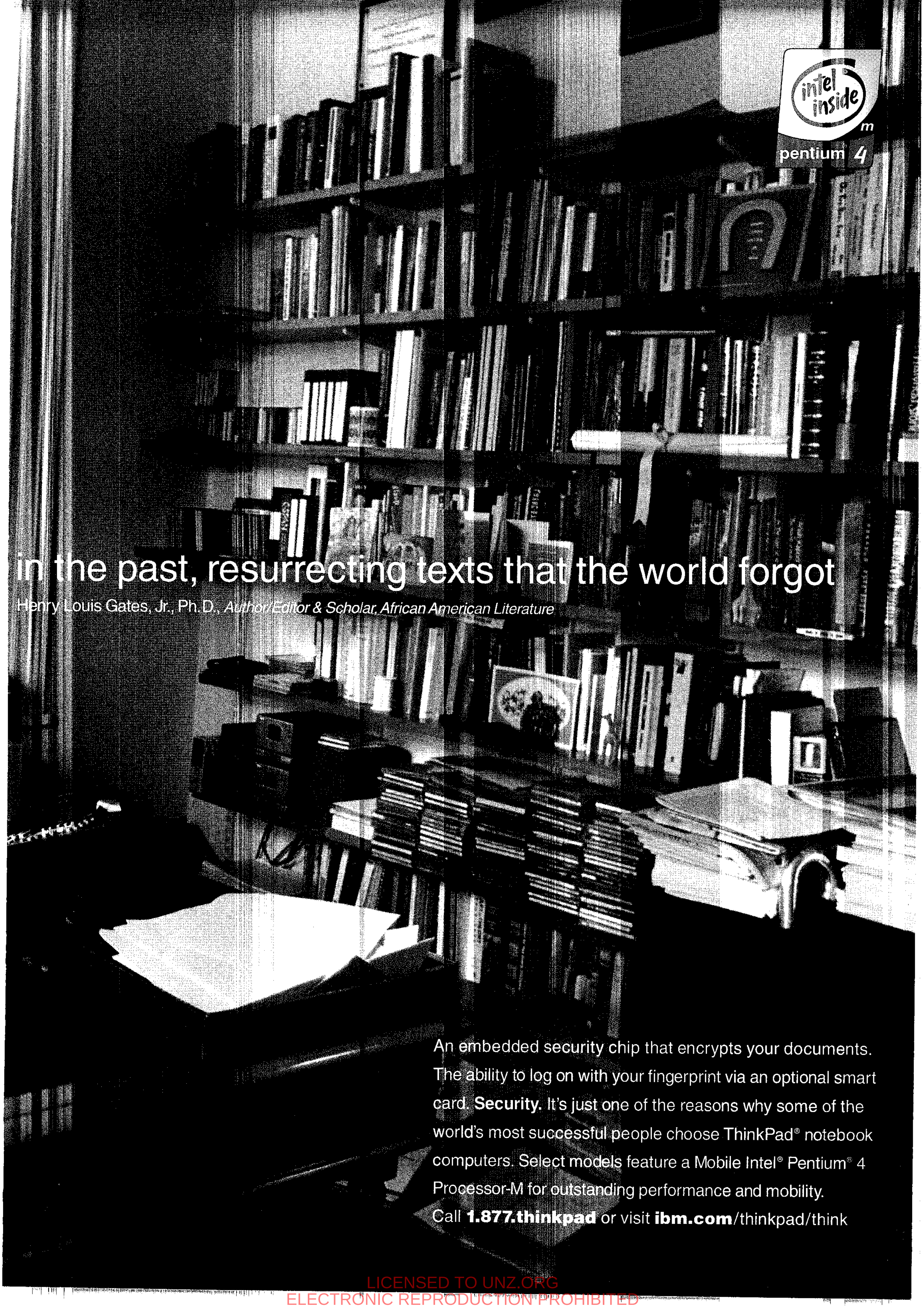
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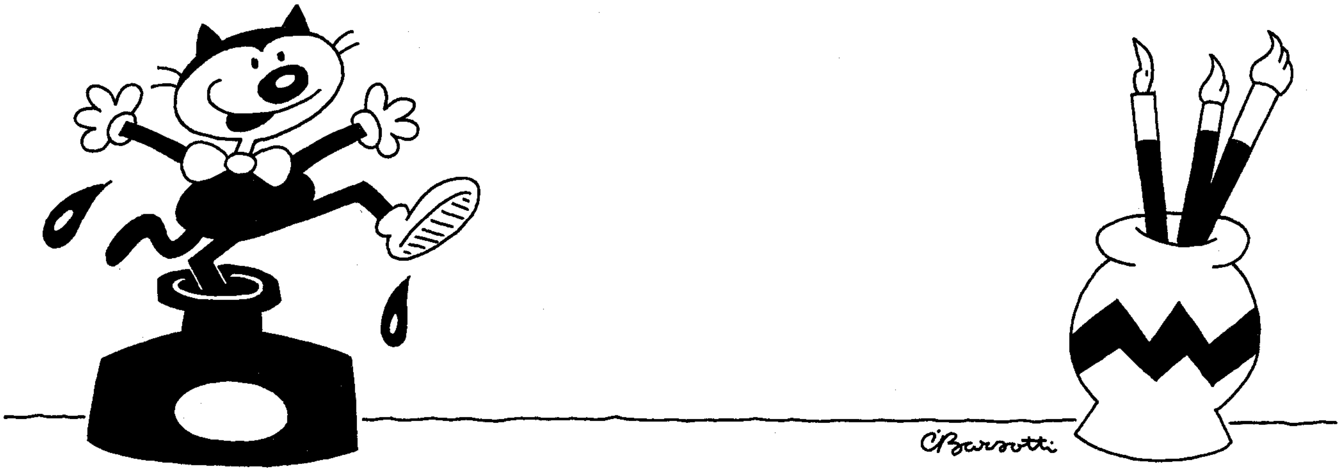

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BEWILDERNESS
The British comedian Bill Bailey brings his one-man show to New York. In previews. Opens Nov. 7 at 8. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

BIG AL
A young screenwriter obsesses over his hero, Al Pacino, in a play by Bryan Goluboff. Previews begin Nov. 7. Opens Nov. 12 at 7. (Arclight, 152 W. 71st St. 239-6200.)

BLUE/ORANGE
The British playwright Joe Penhall brings his play about mental illness and racism to New York in a production that stars Harold Perrineau, Jr., Zeljko Ivanek, and Glenn Fitzgerald. Previews begin Nov. 6.(Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St., 239-6200.)

BOSTON MARRIAGE
David Mamet's play about the charged friendship between two women in nineteenth-century New England stars Kate Burton and Martha Plimpton. Karen Kohlhaas directs. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

CHEKHOV NOW FESTIVAL
The annual celebration of the life and works of Anton Chekhov continues, with Ellen Beckerman's "Gull," a new musical called "Moscow," which is a gay-themed adaptation of "Three Sisters," and other pieces. The series runs through Nov. 23. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 414-7773.)

DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES
A musical based on the 1967 Roman Polanski film, starring Michael Crawford, with music by Jim Steinman and a book by David Ives, Mr. Steinman, and Michael Kunze. John Rando is the director. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN
Rob Becker returns to New York for a brief engagement in his one-man comedy about male-female relationships. Nov. 12-24. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

FAR AWAY
Frances McDormand stars in a new play by Caryl Churchill, directed by Stephen Daldry. In previews. Opens Nov. 11 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

THE FOURTH SISTER
In Janusz Glowacki's update of Chekhov's "Three Sisters," three Muscovite women yearn for the good life in America. In previews. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

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THE FOURTH WALL
Sandy Duncan and Charles Kimbrough return to the stage in a new play by A. R. Gurney, about suburban entrapment. David Saint directs. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

GHOSTS
The Classic Stage Company presents Lanford Wilson's new translation of the Ibsen play, starring Amy Irving and directed by Daniel Fish. In previews. Opens Nov. 10 at 7. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210, ext. 13.)

PAN ASIAN REPERTORY
The second show of the Rep's season, "Goy Vey! Adventures of a Dim Sun in Search of His Wanton Father," begins this week, and has a short run, Nov. 6-24. (West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St. 279-4200.)

POOR BEAST IN THE RAIN
Terence Lamude directs the second play in Billy Roche's Wexford Trilogy. In previews. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 206-1515.)

RUSSELL SIMMONS' DEF POETRY JAM ON BROADWAY
Nine poets and a d.j. create a hip-hop poetry experience, inspired by Mr. Simmons's HBO series. In previews. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE
A new play directed by David Esbjornson, based on the best-selling book. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BAILEGANGAIRE
The Irish Repertory Theatre's staging of Tom Murphy's play stars Pauline Flanagan as a senile woman who never reaches the end of her nightly yarn about a local laughing contest. Closes Nov. 24. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

BETTY RULES
A kinetic alterna-rock musical, directed by Michael Greif ("Rent"), chronicling the nearly two-decade-long career of a real-life girl band called Betty and its members' long battle to keep the group and their sanity intact on the road, at home, onstage, and even in therapy. The group was formed in 1985 in the D.C. suburbs by two Jewish sisters—Elizabeth (an angry-funny redhead who looks like Laraine Newman) and Amy Ziff (zaftig, with blond dreads)—with Alyson Palmer, an African-American singer, bassist, and all-around bombshell. For an hour and a half, the women create a collage of scenes and songs that would resemble a good night on "Saturday Night Live" if the guest band were also to perform the skits. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 239-6200.)

BOOK OF DAYS
The Signature Theatre Company's Lanford Wilson season continues with a new drama, in which a suspicious death disturbs the tranquillity of a small Midwestern town. Marshall Mason is the director. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

BURN THIS
In Lanford Wilson's 1987 drama, an angry straight man meets his gay brother's roommates after his brother's death, forcing the characters to confront the lies they have told in their lives. The piece is too long, and feels longer still because so many of the characters are so badly drawn. Catherine Keener's listless, flailing performance as one of the roommates shows no sign of the razor-sharp presence that she projects in her films, but Edward Norton is brilliant as the surviving brother. He's a great stage actor, an heir to the suave and psychologically riveting Frederic March. Closes Nov. 9 and reopens Nov. 20 with Elisabeth Shue and Peter Sarsgaard in the lead roles. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS
In the Aquila Theatre Company's excellent production of Shakespeare's intricately foolish story, the laughs are many and the delights deep. The seven cast members mix remarkable range with insane energy. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

DEBBIE DOES DALLAS
This saucy, tongue-in-cheek romp, choreographed with extreme limberness by Jennifer Cody and directed by Erica Schmidt (who adapted it from the porn film) redefines "physical" comedy. When cheerleading captain Debbie (Sherie Rene Scott) is tapped to join the Texas Cowgirls, her squad takes on after-school jobs to help pay her airfare to Dallas. Their bosses offer to richly reward them for lubricious overtime duties, and the girls hesitate . . . for a moment. Scott, deliberating, sings the deadpan lyric "Ten dollars closer to Dallas, ten dollars closer to my dream," making sex seem squeaky clean—and inflaming her dirty-minded boss all the more. Mary Catherine Garrison, as the jealous Lisa, looks like Baby Spice and acts like a malevolent sprite, absent-mindedly touching herself whenever she is distracted, which is often. Her solo, "God Must Love a Fool," sung with rocker brio, is a star turn. Jon Patrick Walker, as Debbie's pant-

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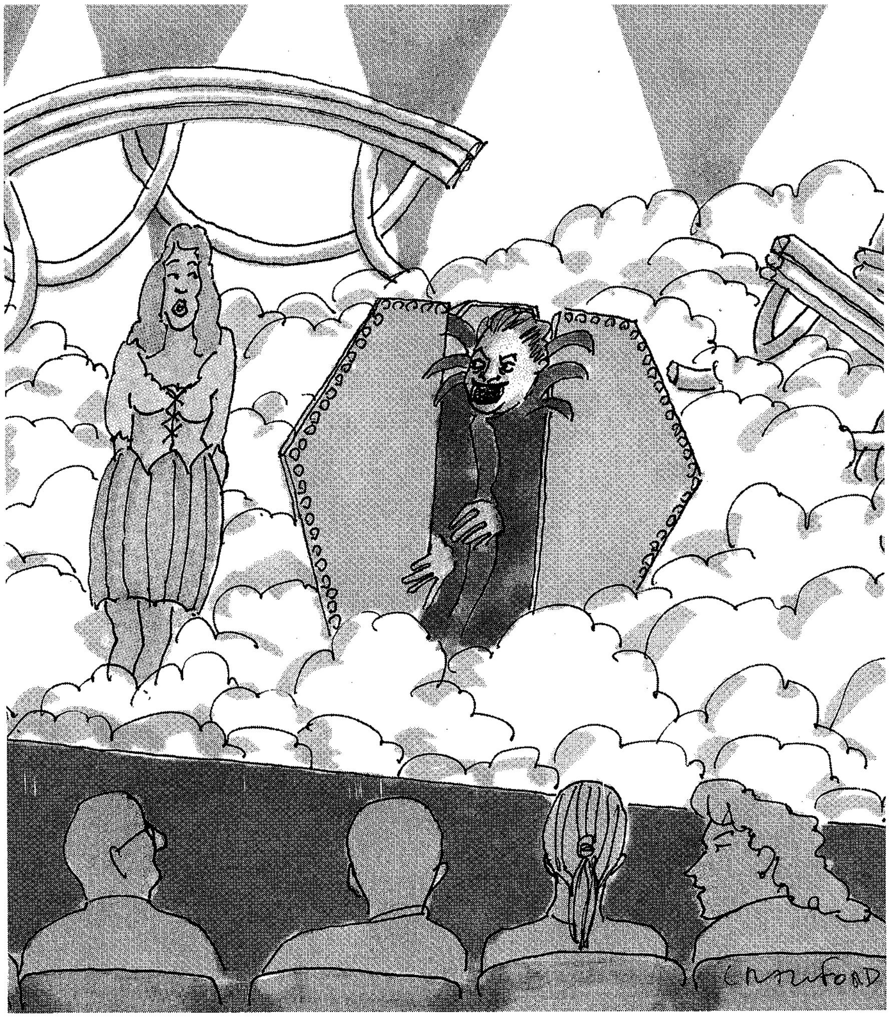


"He may be a lecherous bloodsucker, but at least he's making an effort."
(Michael Crawford in "Dance of the Vampires.")

ingly frustrated quarterback heartthrob, Rick, and Paul Fitzgerald, as the mustachioed Señor Bradley, are a scream. (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

THE EXONERATED
Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen's play, directed by Bob Balaban, is the most basic kind of theatre: no sets, no costumes, no songs, no spectacle. What it does have to offer is extraordinary news: the harrowing stories of a handful of souls who have spent up to twenty-two years on death row before walking free. Put together from interviews and from the public record, the play is performed by ten actors whose lines bear witness both to the ineptness of the American judicial system and to the poetry of ordinary citizens. Its stories are stark and cunningly orchestrated. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/28/02.) (45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

FLOWER DRUM SONG
The original libretto for this 1958 Rodgers and Hammerstein show, set in San Francisco's Chinatown, was a racial cartoon on the Jerry Lewis level of cultural sensitivity, told with a smidgen of pidgin. Kenneth Tynan called the musical "a world of woozy song." But here the playwright David Henry Hwang puts a new chassis on an old engine, and the result is a vehicle that runs far better than its prototype. The story works now, and the snazzy direction and choreography of Robert Longbottom help make up for the weakness of the music. This version includes at least four floor-show numbers, the most outrageous being "Fan Tan Fannie," in which the leggy Sandra Allen bumps and grinds her Asian-American heart out as a bevy of disembodied red and black fans keep time behind her. The production is part fashion show, part night-club act, part hymn to Asian-American diversity. (11/4/02) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE
Edie Falco and Stanley Tucci star in Terrence McNally's sentimental two-character study about a man and a woman who are marginalized by life. The brilliant Falco is the best reason to see this derivative work, which owes a great deal to William Inge. Joe Mantello directs. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

HAIRSPRAY
This musical-comedy version of the 1988 John Waters movie takes off from the opening number and never loses its momentum. In Baltimore in 1962, the rotund teen Tracy Turnblad (Marissa Jaret Winokur) wants to dance, make out with the best-looking boy in town, and integrate "The Corny Collins Show," a local teen-dance TV program. David Rockwell's sets and William Ivey Long's costumes combine to highlight the period artifacts in an ecstasy of gorgeous bad taste, offered with just enough invention to achieve lyrical wit. With the great Harvey Fierstein, plucked, shaved, and padded, as Tracy's mother, Edna Turnblad. Jack O'Brien is the director. (9/2/02) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

HARLEM SONG
Essentially a revue, using both old and new compositions, selected or written by the director George C. Wolfe and the show's talented music supervisors, Zane Mark and Daryl Waters. The Harlem of "Harlem Song" is not an urban wasteland in the process of reinventing itself. It is a realm of legend and lore, and a mythical homeland, which it is our duty as theatregoers, as citizens, to celebrate. This is a point worth making, but not one that bears much repeating. (8/19 & 26/02) (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 307-7171.)

HOLLYWOOD ARMS
Linda Lavin, Michele Pawk, and Frank Wood lead the cast in a play based on Carol Burnett's memoir of her childhood, written by Ms. Burnett and the late Carrie Hamilton, her daughter. Harold Prince is the director. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

IN REAL LIFE
Charlayne Woodard's one-woman show chronicles the time in her early twenties when she moved to New York City, with the intention of becoming a "serious" actress. Instead of performing in Chekhov's "Three Sisters," as she had hoped, Woodard finds herself starring opposite Nell Carter in "Ain't Misbehavin'," a Fats Waller musical revue. High points include Woodard's reenactment of the "Ain't Misbehavin'" audition, when she tried to prove that she could dance (although she never learned how), and her very funny rivalry with Nell Carter. Woodard performs her material enthusiastically, but, perhaps because she covers only a short time in her still young career, there isn't much depth to the life lessons she imparts. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

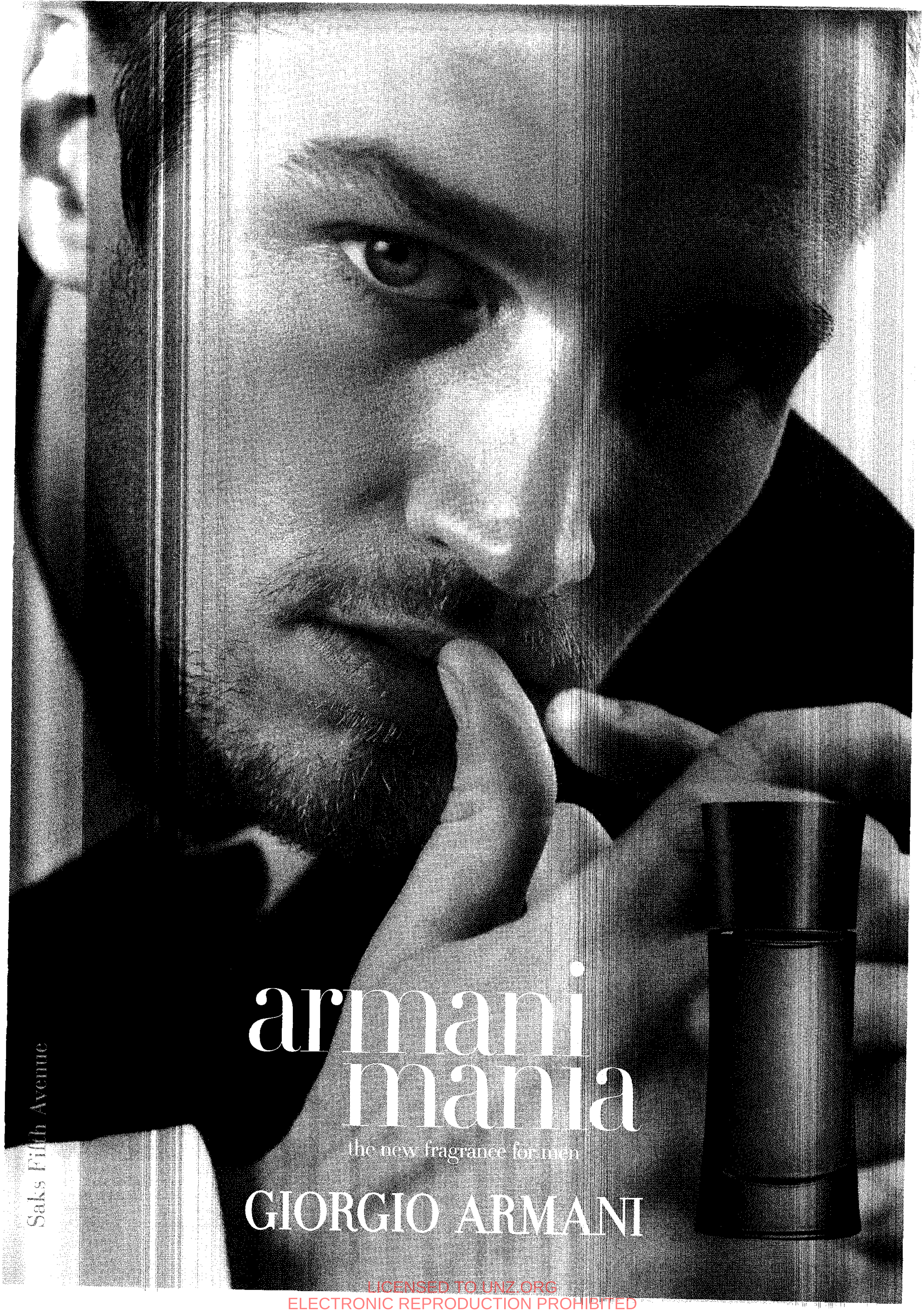
JOLSON & COMPANY
In their new play, Stephen Mo Hanan and Jay Berkow pay tribute to the great vaudevillian Al Jolson. Hanan channels Jolson, singing fourteen of the songs he made famous, including "My Mammy," and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Goodbye." The songs emerge as a late-life Jolson reminisces about his childhood, his career, and his four wives. The characters in his flashbacks are played by Robert Ari and Nancy Anderson, whose adept transformations balance Hanan's inevitable hamminess. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

JULIUS CAESAR
The beginning of the Axis Company's production is played with the blandness of expression that you might expect from a corporate-training video, mixed with dopey Rome-by-way-of-Club-Med costumes. But around the time that Caesar heads for the Senate on the Ides of March, the actors turn up the heat. George Demas plays the part of the imperial leader with echoes of contemporary chieftains, political and corporate, American and foreign. The cast is mixed, but Brian Barnhart's Antony and Jim Sterling's Brutus are very strong. (One Sheridan Sq. 807-9300.)

LITTLE HAM
Langston Hughes wrote the story on which this musical is based, and his version of feel-good black nationalism comes through. A treacly cliché, the story centers around Hamlet Hitchcock Jones, Harlem's black Lothario—a no-goodnik with lots of charm. Little Ham yearns for respectable Miss Tiny Lee (Monica L. Patton), but Tiny won't have him unless he straightens up and flies right. This becomes increasingly difficult for Ham to do once he hooks up with two white crooks (Richard Vida and Jerry Gallagher) who want to take over Harlem's numbers racket, using Ham as their go-between. While thin on book and too familiar by half, there are some great performances, the best being Brenda Baxton's turn as the night-club performer Sugar Lou Bird, and the excellent Joe Wilson, Jr., as Miss Bird's gay consort, Jimmy. (10/7/02) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE
In this musical, based on the 1994 film about a repressed Irish bus conductor who joins an amateur dramatic society, Alfie Byrne (played by the appealing Roger Rees) reads Oscar Wilde to his passengers by day; by night, in his fantasy life, he walks with him. But, except for his Wildean passion, there's nothing noteworthy about Alfie or his world. He is a prisoner of Catholic guilt, a shy, strangulated soul who lives with his sister (Faith Prince). The show's creators, Terrence McNally (book) and Stephen Flaherty (music), shunned the joyful vulgarity of the show-biz musical only to embrace the aridity of avant-garde precepts. As a result, the show is freighted with psychological baggage that the genre is incapable of carrying. In

MICHAEL CRAWFORD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the end, the production's inveterate tastefulness is its undoing. (10/28/02) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE MAYOR'S LIMO
A comedy by Mark Nassar ("Tony n' Tina's Wedding"), about a homeless man who finds himself at the center of a political war after he unwittingly urinates on the mayor's car during a demonstration. (Kraine, 85 E. 4th St. 352-3101.)

MOVIN' OUT
Twyla Tharp's show about small-town teen-agers coming of age during the Vietnam War era is set to twenty-seven songs by Billy Joel. The story is told through song and dance alone, without dialogue. The logic is lyrical, archetypal, like the words to a song, not narrative, like the words to a play. This creates some confusion, and some banality, in the unfolding events. But the band is terrific, and the dancers—above all, John Selya as the hero, Eddie (of the "Brenda and Eddie" couple in Joel's anthem "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant")—are positively on fire. We've known for a long time that Tharp could make love duets. The revelation here is that she can also do dramatic dances, numbers that collect the emotions that have built in a scene, and nail them. The show is not perfect, but it is bold and serious. (11/4/02) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

MY OLD LADY
Three seasoned performers—Siân Phillips and Jan Maxwell, who play an aged mother-daughter duo, and Peter Friedman, who plays an interloper in their closed world—hash out an unlikely but predictable drama, set, improbably, in Paris. Israel Horovitz's glib script disguises a bid for commercial appeal as a quest for personal identity, but he fools nobody. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD
Julia Carey, Theatre M's director and a member of the company, leads her players as a convict in an Australian penal colony whose governor, a thinking man much influenced by Rousseau, has decided to show mercy to his prisoners by letting them put on a play. The play he chooses is a Restoration comedy called "The Recruiting Officer." Most of the actors ably tackle multiple roles, but their nimbleness can't overcome the limitations of playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker's script—a briny stew of Enlightenment philosophy, farce, and sex and violence. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 875-7995.)

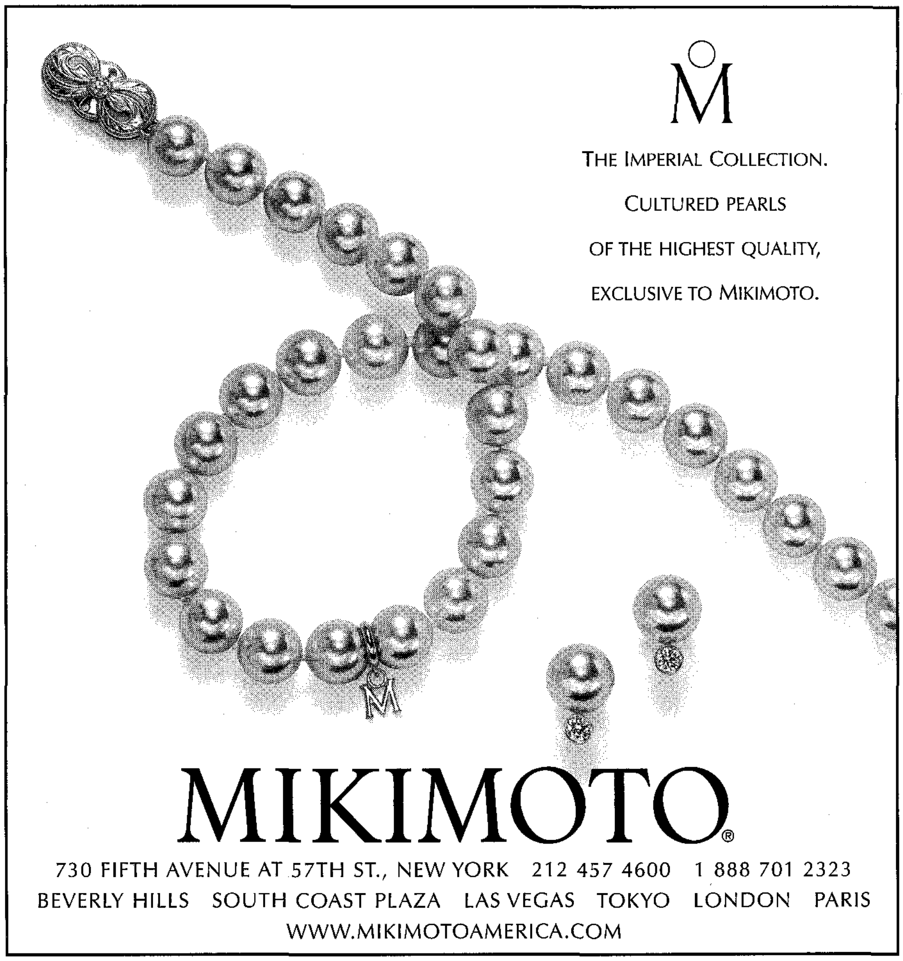
PEARL THEATRE COMPANY
Performances of Gotthold Lessing's eighteenth-century drama "Nathan the Wise," set in Jerusalem during the Crusades, run in repertory with Oliver Goldsmith's 1773 comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer." (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

PRUNE DANISH
Jackie Mason is back on Broadway with a new one-man show. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

ROOMTONE
The experimental theatre group Elevator Repair Service celebrates its tenth anniversary with a new production at P.S. 122. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE
Rupert Holmes's touching and hilarious one-man tribute to the unsinkable George Burns and his more-than-a-sidekick wife, Gracie Allen, almost makes the audience feel more for the cigar-puffing comic in death than in life. As Burns, Frank Gorshin bonds with the audience through a steady string of jokes (some funny, others rueful) and the judicious use of a little soft-shoe. Like both "Yankee Doodle Dandy," the bio-pic of the vaudevillian George M. Cohan, and the sleight-of-hand artist Ricky Jay's card-trick shows, "Goodnight Gracie" is not just a showcase for one man; it's a showcase for an era. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SON OF DRAKULA
The idea behind David Drake's latest one-man show is promising: Drake, who claims he was born with the last name Drakula, reënacts his trek to Romania to uncover whether he is, in fact, a descendant of Vlad the Impaler. The actor's journey is circuitous, and the stock characters he meets—a Lurch-like host in Transylvania, a few too many angry academics—are overwritten digressions,



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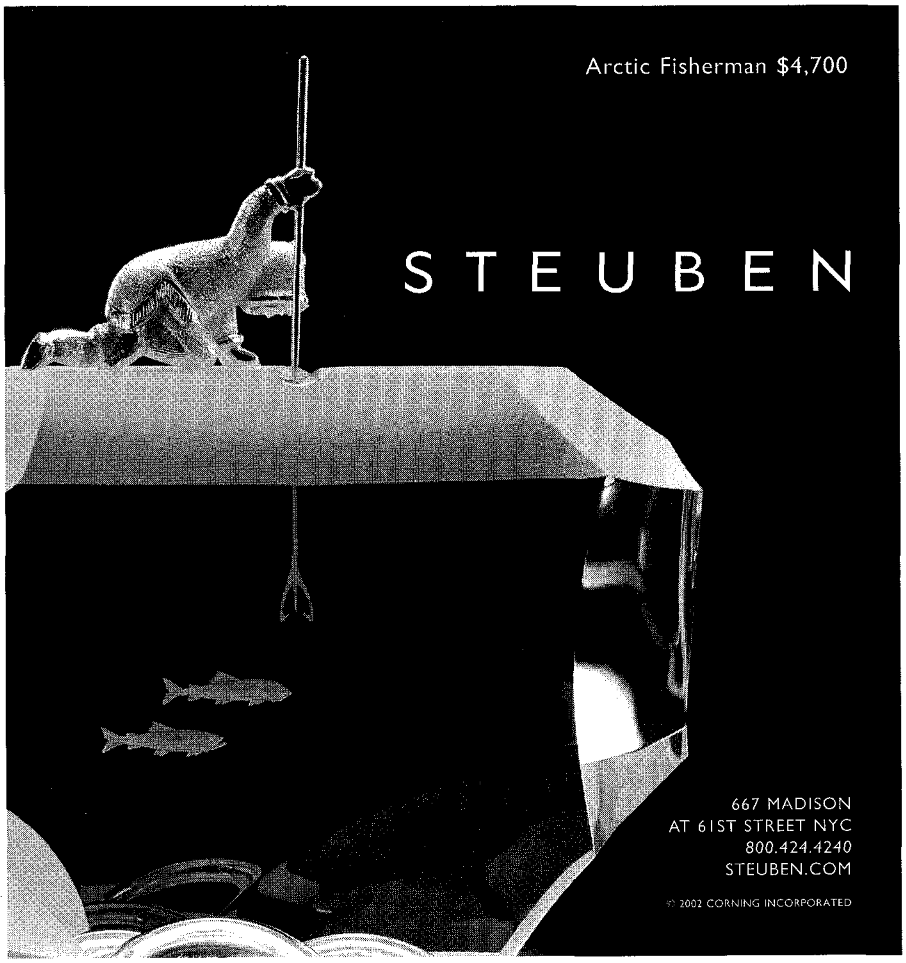

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not necessary pit stops. Ultimately, his path leads to an embarrassing finale far afield of Bram Stoker, in which Drake strips nude and bathes in a pool of water. It's an unwitting parody of downtown theatre, for which the sole reason seems to be to give Drake the chance to show off his toned physique. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

TAKE ME OUT
Richard Greenberg's exhilarating production premièred at London's Donmar Warehouse before coming to New York's Public, where director Joe Mantello has mounted it with crisp, good-humored flair. The play's mischievous title—at once a paean and a plea—hints at Greenberg's equally mischievous ambition: to marry "the old ballgame" with what you could call "the new ballgame": gay politics. "Take Me Out" is about a baseball colossus named Darren Lemming (superbly played by Daniel Sunjata, a young African-American actor), who is a center fielder for the champion New York Empires. One day, he announces at a press conference that he's gay. The news creates an almost seismic disturbance for everyone but Lemming himself, whose attitude is, sex aside, "I'd rather just play ball." (7/22/02) (425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

TEDDY TONIGHT!
Laurence Luckinbill frames his solo play about Theodore Roosevelt with a speech the great man gave the day after his son was killed in the First World War, on the topic of what it means to be an American. If some of Teddy's answers now seem a bit bombastic, others, such as his idea that the United States, in its Declaration of Independence, definitively ceded the past to other nations but claimed the future for itself, deserve consideration. But the evening is far from a dry political discourse: Teddy and Mr. Luckinbill are both a lot of fun. Teddy's humor and genuine zest for life are always on display. In Mr. Luckinbill's third solo outing (after stints as Clarence Darrow and Lyndon Johnson), he has nearly perfected the form. (Abingdon, 312 W. 36th St. 206-1515.)

THE THREE BIRDS
The young British playwright Joanna Laurens has adapted her drama from a lost Sophocles tragedy about a man, his wife, and her sister. (Gale Gates et al., 37 Main St., Dumbo, Brooklyn. 212-352-7085.)

THE WATER COOLERS
A musical revue about office life, with a cast of five, including Marya Grandy of the local a-cappella group Five Floor Monica. (Dillons, 245 W. 54th St. 239-6200.)

WOYZECK
Tom Waits, Kathleen Brennan, and Robert Wilson have teamed up again to put a music-theatre spin on Georg Büchner's 1837 play. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

YELLOWMAN
Relentless and riveting, Dael Orlandersmith's two-person show puts a love story at the heart of a merciless study of self-hatred and suspicion among dark-skinned and light-skinned African-Americans. Orlandersmith and Howard W. Overshown both play a host of characters from two South Carolina families. As Eugene, the "Yellowman" of the title, Overshown conveys vulnerability and stubborn optimism, but his hopefulness is overpowered by the rage of a pair of darker characters. In this case, they are literally darker: there's Alma (Orlandersmith), who hates herself and her mother for her blackness, and Yellowman's own dark-skinned father, who hates his son for the accident of his pale skin color. Orlandersmith's storytelling exposes painful wounds in the black-American psyche, but her hectoring delivery often gives the play the taint of harangue. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

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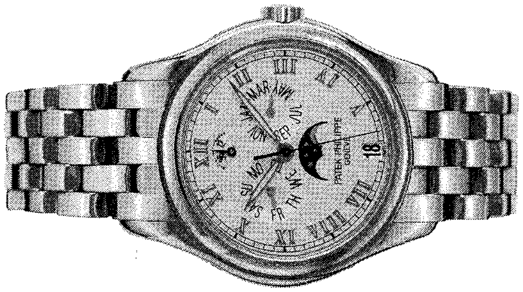

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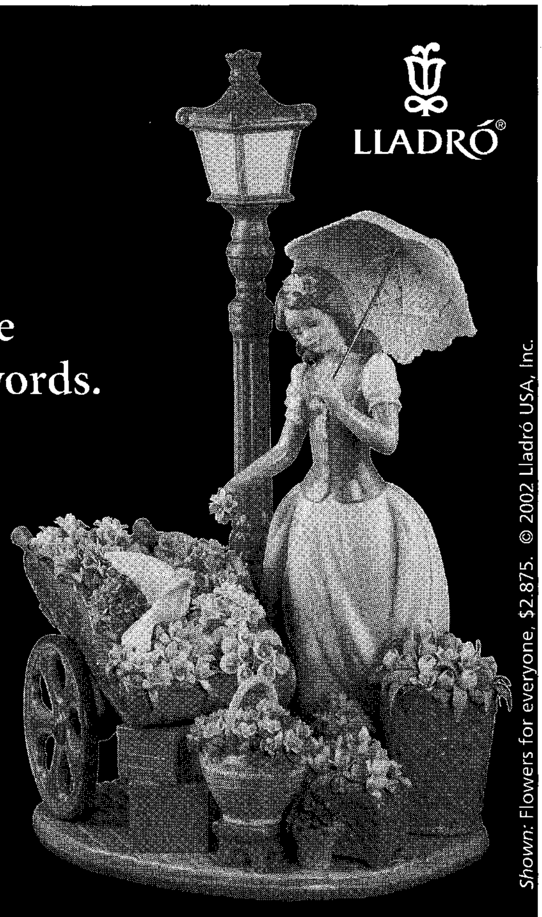

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Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE GRADUATE
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

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The Flea, 41 White St. 206-1515.

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John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

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Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

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Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL
Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

"HOMMAGE AUX BALLETS RUSSES"
"Astonish me," Diaghilev once said, and Thierry Malandain, the artistic director of the four-year-old Ballet Biarritz has obliged by making the impresario's once daring ballets perfectly pleasant. The limpid, earthbound dancing in Malandain's "Specter of the Rose" and "Afternoon of a Faun," for example, remains cool and easy even when the Rose strokes the torso of his dreamy-girl partner, or when the Faun, dressed in underpants, licks his fingers after rolling around on a box of Kleenex the size of a bed. Malandain presents such over-the-top excitation with hardly a hint of campy glee, which may be as shocking in our time as the original ballets were in theirs. (The Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 5-8 at 8, Nov. 9 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 10 at 2 and 7:30.)

"SPLITSTREAM"
Dance Theatre Workshop showcases three emerging choreographers in a shared program that includes Gerald Casel performing the new work "Foible," Maria Hassabi in "Late Night Future," and Amanda Loulaki in a piece about a doll who comes to life. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 5 and Nov. 12 at 7.)

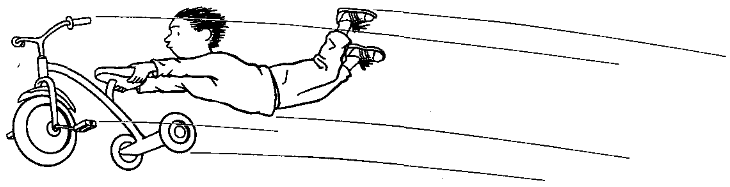
"REFUGE"
Choreographers who work in an expressionist vein tend to be overwhelmed by influence—by Martha Graham, with her heavy-handed symbolism, or preachy Alvin Ailey, or abject Pina Bausch. But Erica Essner, a recent transplant from San Francisco, takes up big and dark subjects without resorting to expressionism's broad strokes. The title piece—a group dance full of falling and catching, set to accordion waltzes and an urgent mix of Bedouin drums and clanging bells—conveys the refuges we invent for ourselves in times of war and terror. To bring this ancient and chronic topic to fearsome life again, Essner uses nuanced, idiosyncratic gesture, delivered with speed and fervor. The dancers' hips gyrate like machine guns; their hands open and close like hungry mouths. The program also includes the guest choreographer Fiona Marcotty's "Parallelogram for Rags and Prayers." (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 334-7479. Nov. 8-10 at 8.)

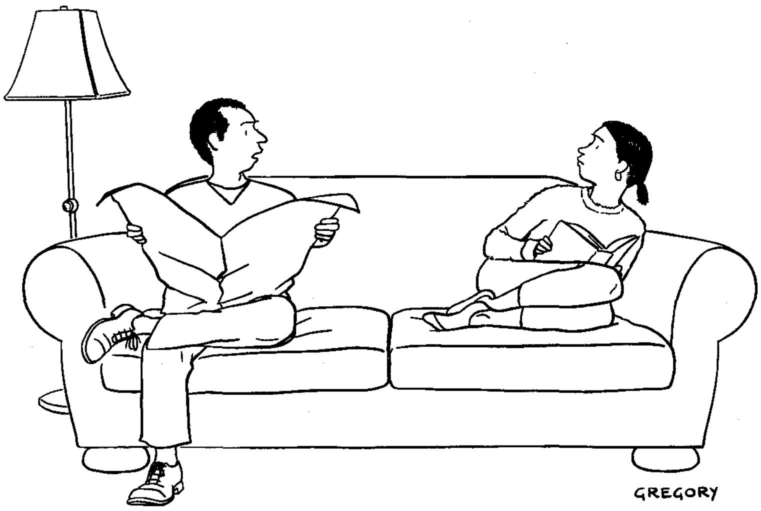
"SUPPLEMENT"
The satisfyingly oddball choreographer Dean Moss insists there is a story to his latest group work: "The story is, Kacie goes to a Rolfer." But what we see is both more antic and more elliptical. While the dancer Kacie Chang, wearing a ruby choker and a yellow cocktail dress, gathers herself up for the performance (which is already under way), the four other cast members engage in enigmatic tasks—massaging their ribs, building a bed of rubber bricks to lie on while singing in Japanese. There are also lulls in the action when, Moss says, "I touch boredom. Like many artists, I want to see how close I can come to that death and still keep the viewer involved." But the piece's emotional currents, shifting direction from comic to eerie to lonely, never subside. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Nov. 7-9 at 8:30 and Nov. 10 at 7:30.)

"STRAIGHT INTO THE EYES"
Poland's Silesian Dance Theatre makes its début at the Kitchen with a work that incorporates video projection with dance, to examine emotion and cultural identity. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793, ext. 11. Nov. 7-9 at 8.)

BALLET ARGENTINO
Kicking off the "World of Dance" series at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, the Argentine dancer Julio Bocca and his company present a concert of classical ballet, tango, and other works. (Whitman Theatre, 2900 Campus Rd., at Hillel Pl. 718-951-4500. Nov. 10 at 2.)

"ENCUENTRO"
DanzActiva of Puerto Rico presents a cross-cultural journey that tracks the intermingling of Indian, Gypsy, and flamenco dance forms as they travelled from Northern India to Andalusia to the New World. Choreographed by Paulette Beauchamp. (Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St. 529-1948. Nov. 7-9 at 8 and Nov. 10 at 4.)

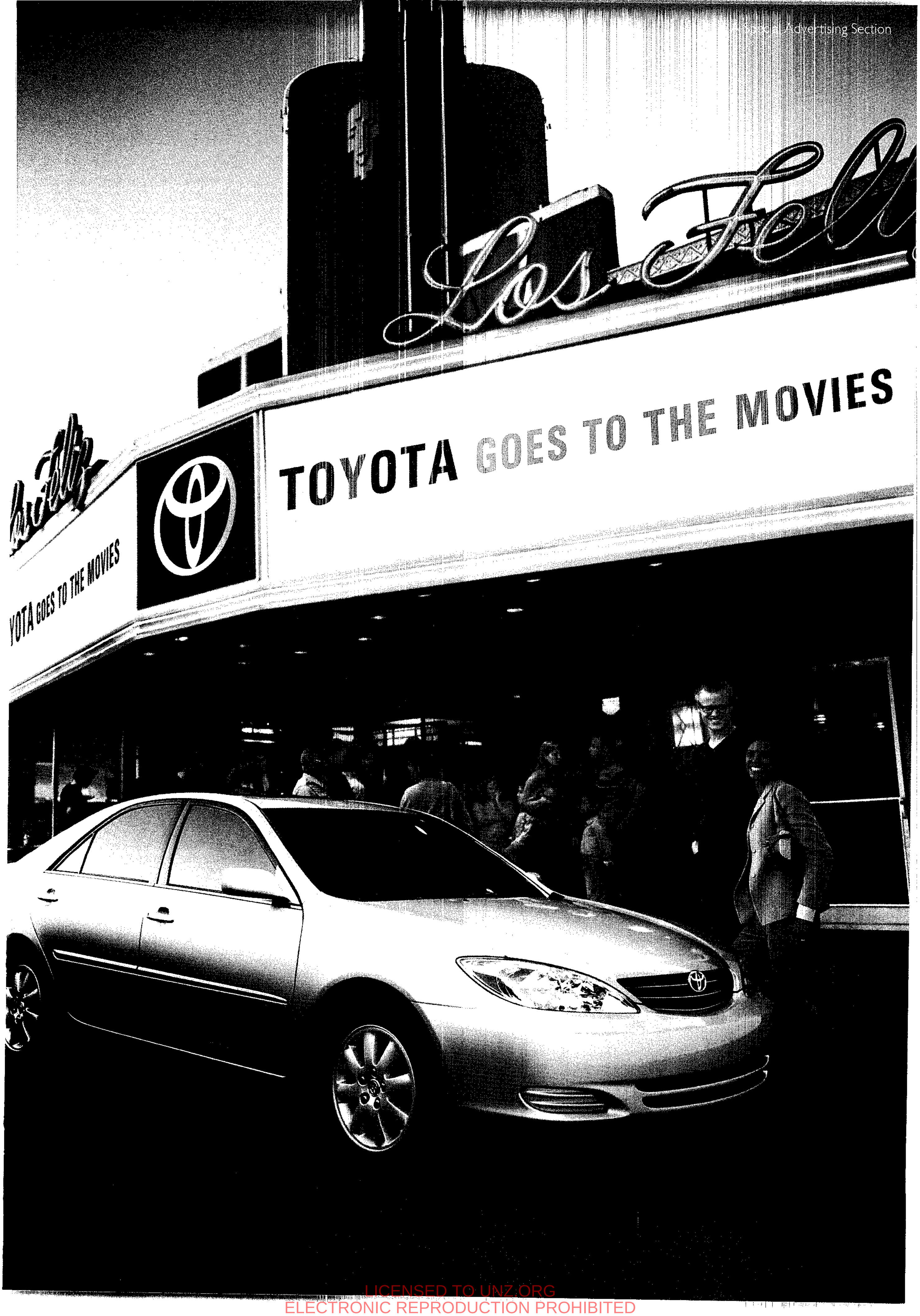




"Should we be worried?"
(Tony Hawk's Boom Boom Huckjam—see Night Life.)

"UNDER/WORLD"
Throughout Roseanne Spradlin's evening-length trio, the dancers—Athena Malloy, Walter Dundervill, and Tasha Taylor—try things on. They pull jackets over their bare breasts, panties over bottoms. They practice variations on a threesome—couple and outsider, three strangers, ménage à trois, three friends. And they perform movements (propellering arms and swatting legs) as if they weren't positive that they fit, in short spurts and with endearingly prissy determination. "They're trying to work something out," Spradlin says. "I'm not sure it has a name, exactly." The result isn't vague but achy, a dance of surreptitious melancholy in which none of the performers quite capture whatever it is they're after. Note: Because of limited seating, reservations are strongly recommended. (Squid Performance Space, 127 Fulton St., near Broadway. 228-9344. Nov. 7-8 at 8 and Nov. 9 at 8 and 10.)

ALEX GREGORY


Los Feliz
TOYOTA GOES TO THE MOVIES
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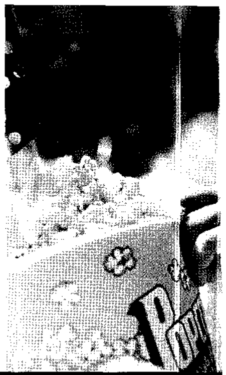
Get the Feeling



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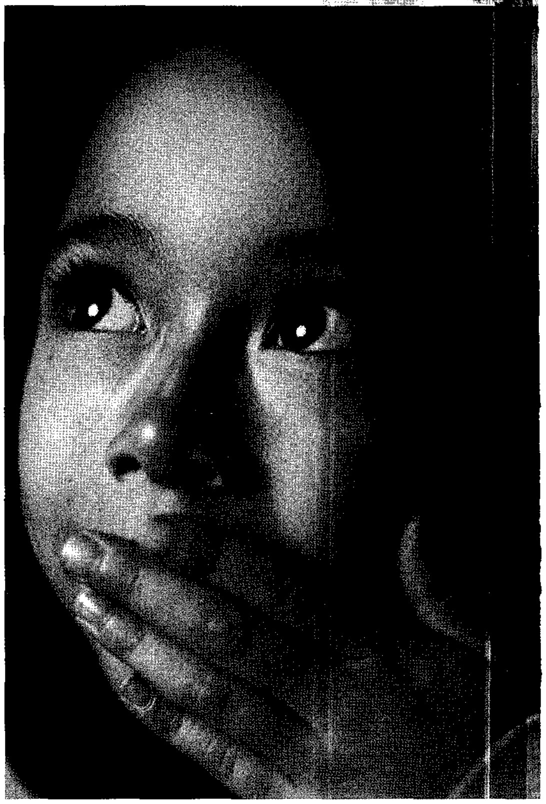

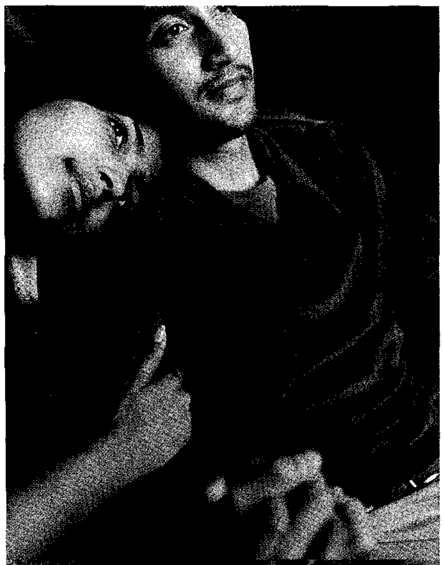

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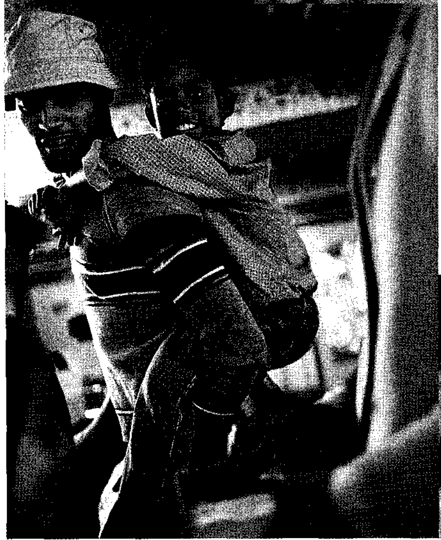
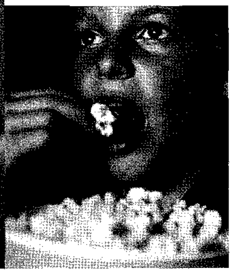


Star Gazing

Toyota and Universal Studios® Theme Parks invite you to celebrate the movies under the stars! Sc of your favorite "*Feel Good*" flicks fill the big screen this month at Universal Studios CityWalks® in Hollywood and Orlando. Open to the public, these events get you into the action with live entertainment and exciting giveaways. For more information, log on to **www.toyotamovies.con**



Saturday Night Feeling

Grab the best seat in the house—your couch. Tune in to ABC and NBC on Saturday nights this November for "*Feel Good*" flicks. Check your local listings for scheduled features and showtimes.

The lights go down, the curtain comes up and all your cares melt away as you dig into a bag of popcorn. Get that familiar feeling as Toyota transports you with a trip to the movies....

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"TRANSPARENCY"
The Dalia Carella Dance Collective presents a trio of global-fusion pieces: "The Offering," which blends Indian and Middle Eastern dance movement; "El Baile del Mantón," involving a traditional Spanish shawl; and "Guardians of the Styx," a conceptual work. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Nov. 7-9 at 8:30 and Nov. 10 at 2.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

TONY HAWK'S BOOM BOOM HUCKJAM
Touted by its creator as a "skate/BMX/moto show of arena proportions, featuring an elaborate ramp system, music, and choreography," skateboarding legend Tony Hawk's Boom Boom Huckjam weds the world of extreme sports with a Lollapalooza-like travelling music festival. The music at these stops is by the Los Angeles hardcore veterans **Social Distortion,** whose gruff, rootsy brand of punk rock is as rough-hewn and resilient as a sturdy, weathered skateboard. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Nov. 7 at 7:30. ♦ Nassau Coliseum. 212-307-7171. Nov. 9 at 7:30.)

JERRY CANTRELL
The release of the former Alice in Chains guitarist's second solo album was overshadowed earlier this year by the death of the Chains' lead singer, Layne Staley, of a drug overdose, but the grunge luminary soldiers on with songs from his all too suitably titled album of brooding dirges, "Degradation Trip." (The World, Broadway at 43rd St. 307-7171. Nov. 8 at 8.)

DON BYRON
A maverick drawn to the music of other mavericks, the clarinettist Byron, who in the past has reconfigured the music of everyone from Mandrill to Henry Mancini, takes on the imaginative works of both Stravinsky and the still uncategorizable Raymond Scott, who is perhaps best known for scoring Looney Tunes cartoons. The fun is in hearing how Byron connects the dots. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Nov. 8 at 8.)

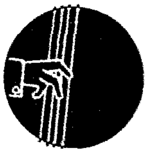
JEWLIA EISENBERG'S CHARMING HOSTESS
The Left Coast singer Eisenberg and her bilingual a-cappella cohorts perform original song cycles based on the diaries and letters of Walter Benjamin and the Bolshevik revolutionary Asja Lacis, with whom he had a tortured relationship. Far from dry (who would think that the musings of these two didactic souls would be anything but?), the songs are often hilarious and touching, and they run the gamut from stridently dissonant to sweet and soulful. (Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St. 917-606-8200. Nov. 9 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
The Masters of Indian Music concert on Nov. 9 at 8 brings together the renowned *sarod* master **Ustad Ali Akbar Khan** and the tabla drummer **Zakir Hussain.** (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St.) ♦ Nov. 10 at 7: For those who follow African music, **Djelimady Tounkara** is a guitarist on the order of Eric Clapton or B. B. King. As the anchor of Mali's Super Rail Band, Tounkara's overwhelming prowess can sometimes be just that, overwhelming. On his own, especially on his new solo album, "Sigui," where he trades an electric guitar for an acoustic one, his restraint serves him well. The result is some of the most sweetly melodic music to be found on any continent. (Symphony Space. For more information, call 545-7536.)

LIL MALCOLM & THE HOUSE ROCKERS
Top-shelf zydeco music from southwestern Louisiana. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 685-7597. Nov. 10 at 7:30.)

REGGIE WORKMAN AND ANDREW CYRILLE
The bassist Reggie Workman and the drummer Andrew Cyrille, a rhythm team with first-rank credentials in both the jazz mainstream and the avant-garde, have lately teamed up to great effect with saxophonist Oliver Lake in a coöperative trio. The saxophonist John Purcell rounds out the group here. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488. Nov. 11 at 6:30.)

JAZZ NOTES



SIDE ORDERS
In jazz, the leaders are the ones who get marquee billing and the ones whose names sell records. But, occasionally, a sideman elevates a release to an unexpectedly high plateau. On three recent albums, the supporting musicians give the headliners a run for their money.

David S. Ware's **"Freedom Suite"** (AUM Fidelity) revisits Sonny Rollins's brilliant 1958 LP of the same name. But where Rollins's project found the saxophone colossus supported by just bass and drums, Ware, himself an explosive tenor, adds a pianist, his frequent collaborator Matthew Shipp. Employing the dark chords and skittering improvisations that have made him one of the most distinct young keyboard stylists of our time, Shipp brings a fresh palette of tonal coloring to Rollins's piece, helping Ware's roaring ensemble make the suite their own.

It would be hard to steal the thunder from either Tony Bennett or k. d. lang, particularly when the two vocal titans are paired together, as they are on **"A Wonderful World"** (Columbia), a tribute to Louis Armstrong. Yet it's hard not to feel a jolt of pure inspiration when the tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton slides his way into the proceedings with a perfectly phrased obbligato or a melody-rich solo. Sounding to all the world like a big-band vet on the order of, say, Frank Wess, Hamilton is the album's truest link to Armstrong.

Keith Jarrett's longtime trio partners, the bassist Gary Peacock and the drummer Jack DeJohnette, get to share in the title credit on the new album **"Always Let Me Go: Live in Tokyo"** (ECM). Jarrett is the engine driving this double disk of freely improvised music, but his compatriots are always at his side, either prodding him to investigate hidden corners or nurturing his lyrical flights. In the end, Jarrett may do the grunting, but Peacock and DeJohnette do much of the heavy lifting.

—*Steve Futterman*

JONATHAN RICHMAN AND VIC CHESNUTT
The beloved proto-punk icon Richman is joined by the crackly-voiced singer-songwriter Chesnutt. Few can match Chesnutt's narrative lyrics, which combine social insight, Southern-gothic pathos, and sly humor. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Nov. 11 at 8.)

"MANHATTAN RHAPSODY"
At its annual benefit concert, the **Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra,** plus a mélange of prominent guests including **Patti LuPone, Paul Simon, Woody Allen,** and **August Wilson,** turn out to honor two venerable jazz institutions, the pioneering drummer **Max Roach** and the legendary Village Vanguard, whose tough but tender owner, Lorraine Gordon, will also be on hand. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Nov. 11 at 7:30.)

BOB DYLAN
The great troubadour, who just happens to be at the peak of his career. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Nov. 11 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

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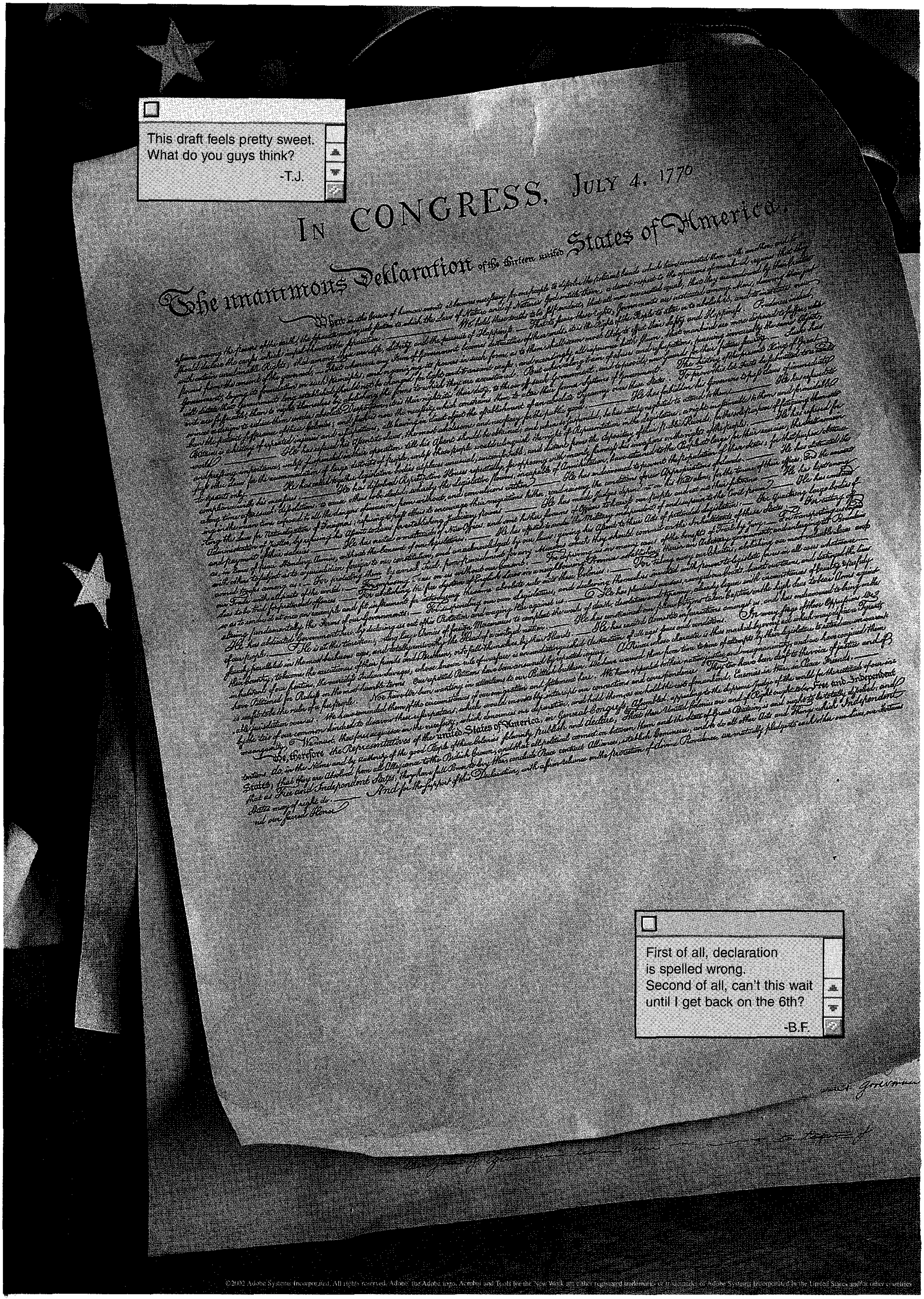

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
The unanimous Dekfaration of the thirteen united States of America,

This draft feels pretty sweet.
What do you guys think?
-T.J.

First of all, declaration
is spelled wrong.
Second of all, can't this wait
until I get back on the 6th?
-B.F.

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who sully both of the genres they attempt to merge. They're like the Beastie Boys without a conscience or Eminem without snappy vitriol, and they're best left to the slack-jawed frat boys. Nov. 12: With his veteran British New Wave band, Squeeze, on hiatus again, **Glenn Tilbrook** hits the road.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Nov. 7: The Beatle-esque combo **Fountains of Wayne** sings of unrequited love, suburban ennui, and teen covetousness. Nov. 8: **Leo Kottke,** the virtuosic twelve-string guitarist, often sounds stiff in his studio recordings, and his latest offering, "Clone," a collaboration with the Phish bassist **Mike Gordon,** is no exception. But his live performances are alchemic, as the endearingly dour Kottke fingerpicks an endless array of melodic lines that make his guitar bubble over with life. Nov. 9: The countrypolitan sounds of Kurt Wagner's **Lambchop.** Nov. 11: The **Donnas** infuse the street-gang uniformity of the Ramones (they've all taken the same first name) with classic girl-group coquettish charm. But even if their tough-chicks-with-guitars aesthetic seems slightly contrived, their spirited fusion of punk, pop, and heavy metal redeems the group.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 6: The **Lords of Acid** are bawdy Belgians with a penchant for industrial dance beats. Their subtlety-free metallic dance music caters to the tirelessly libidinous. Nov. 7-10: Four nights of harmonic-driven rock with **Blues Traveler.**

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 6: The **Mountain Goats.** John Darnielle has made his reputation, and a flood of albums, out of a staunch devotion to low-fidelity recording, most often on a department-store boom box. With **John Vanderslice.** Nov. 9: The singer-songwriters **Katell Keineg** and **Vinicius Cantuaria.** Keineg is a Welsh-born banshee who sings intricate songs of pain and loss, and Cantuaria is a Brazilian native whose poignant bossa nova has been known to move audience members to tears.

MAKOR
35 W. 67th St. (601-1000)—Nov. 6: **Darden Smith** has mellowed from a Nashville prodigy into a more subtle singer-songwriter. His new album, "Sunflower," finds him in a reflective mood; on songs like "Stronger," his gentle voice belies the stern message of a man leaving his needy lover. Nov. 12: The **Kivun Project** presents a new-music program of works by Israeli-born composers who are currently living in New York City.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 12: Having already won over the fickle British music press with their explosive garage rock and gymnastics-heavy live show, New Zealand's hirsute and perpetually sweaty **Datsuns** hope to win equal approval Stateside and join the Hives et al. at the top of the heap.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope (718-230-0236)—Nov. 6: **Maplewood,** a new band featuring members of Champale, Koester, and Nada Surf, joins **Canyon** for a evening of backcountry ballads along the lines of the Flying Burrito Brothers. Nov. 7: **Amy Rigby,** the former postmodern girl grouper (the Shams) and cowpunk (the East Village hillbilly band the Last Roundup).

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Nov. 9: **Barbez.** The multilingual outer-borough post-punk chamber ensemble now includes Pamelia Kurstin, a theremin virtuoso who is also known for her roller-skating prowess.

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-0505)—Nov. 8: The Brazilian-born mad scientist **Amon Tobin** creates wholly new music out of the funky beats of electronic elements and such sounds as orchestral strings, traditional jazz combos, and psychedelic bass lines. Nov. 10: The **Donnas** (see the Bowery Ballroom).

Bettie Page

The art world's newest institution: MoSex, or the Museum of Sex.

VICTORIA ROBERTS

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Nov. 16: A superbly swinging singer who could just as easily be knocking them dead at a jazz club, the San Francisco-based **Paula West** brings a gust of vitality and vocal artistry to the cabaret scene. The pianist **Eric Reed** and his trio provide the accompaniment. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Nov. 5-6 and Nov. 10: **Jon Hendricks.** The man who brought the jazz world vocalese with the celebrated ensemble Lambert, Hendricks & Ross continues to adapt his own lyrics to jazz melodies and to perform them with tongue-twisting panache. Nov. 7-9: The two-man, two-woman vocal unit that is the **Manhattan Transfer** has been successfully updating the Lambert, Hendricks & Ross model for three decades. At this anniversary engagement, expect to hear all their signature tunes, from "Boy from New York City" to "Birdland."

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and the magisterially puckish **Bobby Short** and his eight-piece orchestra. ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the **Loston Harris** trio is in attendance.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Nov. 9: **Betty Buckley.** In her new program, the Texas-born former "Cats" star returns to her roots, offering choice Americana from the likes of Jesse Winchester, Janis Ian, Marty Balin, and her guitarist, Stephen Bruton.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 10: Listening to **Mose Allison** slam the piano, you might think Jimmy Yancey had been possessed by Monk and Bartók. This Southern gentleman is nothing less than a national treasure. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Nov. 10: **Gary Bartz.** The fallow years of the eighties are a long-ago memory for this fully rejuvenated alto and soprano saxophonist, who is probably best known for his early-seventies stint with Miles Davis. Bartz is playing even better than he did then, having traded in his dalliances with funk fusion for serious modal-bop improvising. He's planning to bring in a string quartet to augment his superb quintet as he reinterprets the colorful music of the Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov. Dining.

MAKOR
35 W. 67th St. (601-1000)—Nov. 13: Like his fellow clarinet whiz Don Byron, **David Krakauer** can't help but mess with the music he loves. In Krakauer's mischievous, expert hands, klezmer becomes a mutable genre, with shades of rock, jazz, hip-hop, and funk. The results make for a bracing, mind-expanding evening.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Nov. 7: **John Zorn** is calling in a whole cadre of plugged-in colleagues to convene his Electric Masada project. **Cyro Baptista, John Medeski, Marc Ribot,** and others will join the leader in a repertoire of Zorn originals that mate Jewish musical themes with free-jazz improvisation.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Nov. 10: The **Greg Osby 5.** Osby is the modern bandleader to put your money on. He's an altoist with his own sound—bright and metallic-toned, with a rhythmic energy that follows its own skewed metronome—and he's becoming the Art Blakey of his day, collecting a coterie of bright young players around him. The most dazzling of them may be the pianist **Jason Moran,** a wily, unpredictable improviser who meshes perfectly with Osby, and who, to judge from his own recent recordings, is the next major jazz talent to pay attention to. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

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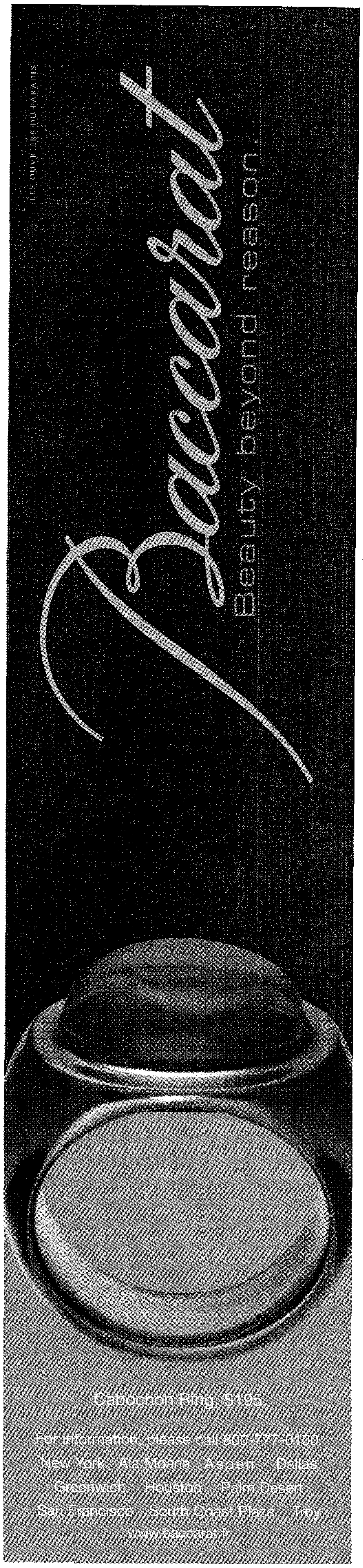
New York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WARWICK HOTEL
65 W. 54th St. (247-2700)—The St. Louis transplant **Linda Presgrave**, a probing, resourceful mainstream pianist with an impressive début album, "In Your Eyes," prowls the bebop landscape for all the stylistic diversity it can offer. She leads a trio on Fridays through November.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—Vija Celmins is well known for her otherworldly paintings and drawings of natural subjects—starry skies, spiderwebs, desert sands—rendered with lapidary precision, but this show marks the first museum retrospective devoted to her prints. Celmins's meticulous hand is ideally suited to printmaking, especially the traditional techniques she favors, such as mezzotint, etching, and wood engraving. All of Celmins's works are based on photographs rather than direct observation, and these monochrome prints, with their lunar black-and-white palette, have a stirring detachment, like thoughts beyond the reach of memory. Through Dec. 29. ♦ Richard Avedon, the only photographer to be played by Fred Astaire in a Hollywood musical ("Funny Face," from 1956), returns to the site of his 1978 retrospective. The hundred and eighty portraits, dating from the forties (an anonymous Sicilian boy in a state of barely suppressed mania) to last year (Harold Bloom with his eyes closed, radiating lassitude), make up a sort of idiosyncratic American *Who's Who*. Poets, painters, drifters, and politicos stand simply and stare into the lens. With Avedon's blank white background behind them, there's nowhere to hide, and the result is an intimacy that's both confrontational and preternaturally delicate. Backlight creeps around the edges of heads; by contrast, facial features darken, and niches and wrinkles seem triple-etched. Avedon's look is largely a matter of extreme values, but the secret of his superbright whites and velvety blacks is that they reinvent grays—as something rare, fugitive, and cherishable. Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (708-9480)—**"Drawing Now: Eight Propositions,"** a trailblazing show by curator Laura Hoptman, sets the MOMA seal of approval on twenty-six youngish international artists working in the medium that's been the bedrock of visual art since Lascaux. Hoptman's "propositions" identify current modes of drawing, including illustration, decoration, fashion, architectural and scientific drafting, and comics. The show suggests a forge of styles, in which artists hammer out new links between craft, discipline, and worldly import. Some—John Currin, Elizabeth Peyton, Neo Rauch, Ugo Rondinone—are farther along than others, but nearly all convey the exhilaration of being onto something. For the first time in quite a while at a museum group show, exacting comparison, argument, and judgment seem a matter of course. Don't miss this. Through Jan. 6. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Hollywood disaster flick meets Renaissance fresco (think "The Poseidon Adventure" with art direction by Fra Angelico) in **"Going Forth by Day,"** Bill Viola's visually striking five-channel video piece commissioned by a German bank for the Guggenheim Berlin. In one projection, an eclectic procession traipses through a light-dappled forest (the panoramic image evokes old-fashioned CinemaScope). In an adjacent scene, water gushes from the windows and doors of a pristine building façade. Death and resurrection figure elsewhere in the action, as Viola tackles Big Themes. The work was conceived before the events of September 11th, and the portent of disaster is uncanny, if you can handle the smugly pious tone. Through Jan. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Two independent installations by Lorna Simpson continue her long-standing exploration of race. "Cameos and Appearances" (2002) presents irregular grids of photographs in which oval portraits of two hip-looking African-Americans—a man with stylish glasses and a woman with a delicate nose stud—are interspersed with text citing racial stereotypes from literature and popular culture. The sleek pair could be culled from a Gap ad, but with captions like "Femmes Arabes en Voyage" or "Blacula," their aspect changes subtly. Meanwhile, the video installation "31" tracks a young black woman across thirty-one screens, representing years of her life, perhaps, or days of the month. She brushes her teeth, rides the subway, and goes to work or to the doctor in a visual narrative that owes something to Godard and something to MTV. Through Jan. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Judy Chicago's monumental installation **"The Dinner Party"**—a delta-shaped banquet table for thirty-nine worthies from Primordial Goddess to Georgia O'Keeffe—comes from an era when women were wimmin. When the piece was completed, in 1979 (with the help of more than four hundred needleworkers and ceramicists), the sexual equipment pictured in the banquet plates shocked viewers, who found it either too explicit or too reductive. The work languished in storage. Now part of the museum's permanent collection, it looks wonderful—brilliantly colorful, poignantly bygone, but nevertheless a bona-fide triumph of scale and allegory. Through Feb. 9. ♦ **"Exposed: The Victorian Nude,"** from Tate Britain, is a strong historical show about an era when jumpiness about sex had bizarre effects in art. Literary and classical themes provided the alibis for displaying naked females. Popular guises included Shakespearean fairies, virtuous heroines (Lady Godiva rides again, and again), Roman decadents, and the like. For male nakedness, the excuse was propaganda for robust healthiness. Lust lurked, and smut reigned. A turn toward frankness around the turn of the century—in the gloomy nudes of Walter Sickert and the too little known William Orpen—offers a fresh invention: actual people. Orpen's felicitously titled "The English Nude" (1900), a Rembrandtesque tour de force, presents a regular, interesting woman on a rumpled bed. Its mystery is that of really lived life. Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS
548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—Rosemarie Trockel is as enigmatic as ever in a show pairing recent video projections and abstract aluminum sculptures. The monoliths are made of movable metal plates (their interlocking patterns recall the artist's knit "paintings" from the eighties), and they double as projection screens. All but one of the videos feature a fetching young blonde named Manu in exploits ranging from pregnancy (her swollen belly turns out to be a balloon) to death (a slapstick collapse into an open grave). In one noteworthy scenario, Trockel casts Manu as Mother Courage (costume by Courrèges) and makes her look like a variety of famous heroines from Jackie O. to Brigitte Bardot. Through June, 2003. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

JAPAN SOCIETY
333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—The principles of Japanese interior design are illustrated with a small but choice selection from five hundred years of precious objects in **"Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries."** Silks and ceramics, scrolls and kimonos, evince the quality of "kazari," a word that means "the delirious effect of adorning the hair with flowers." Indeed, the display of carved and

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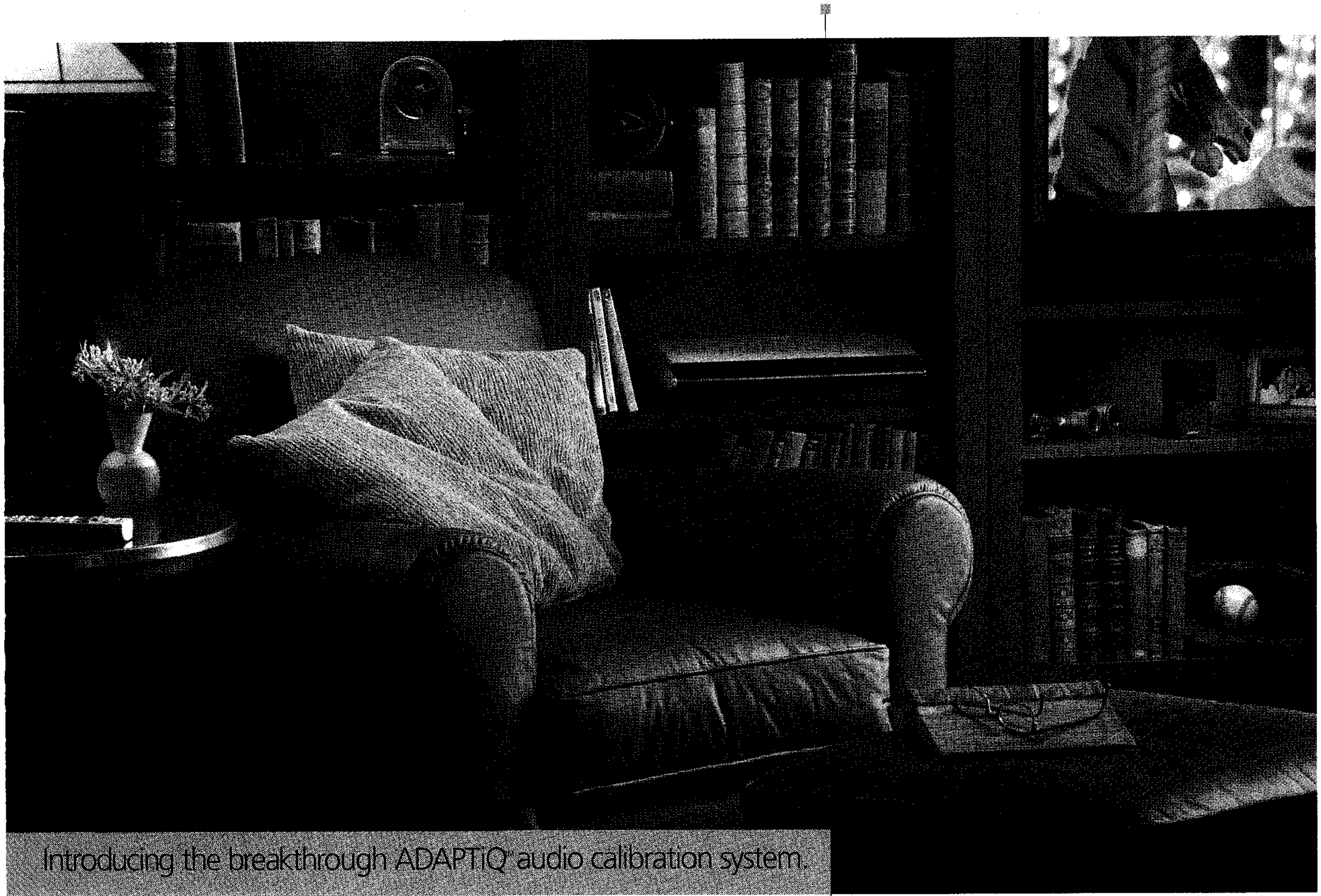

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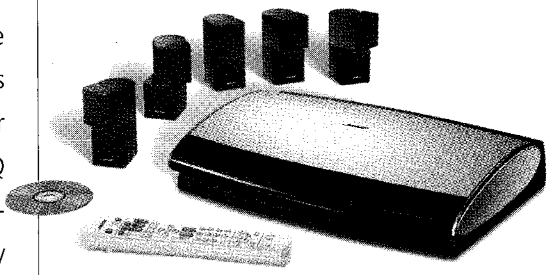

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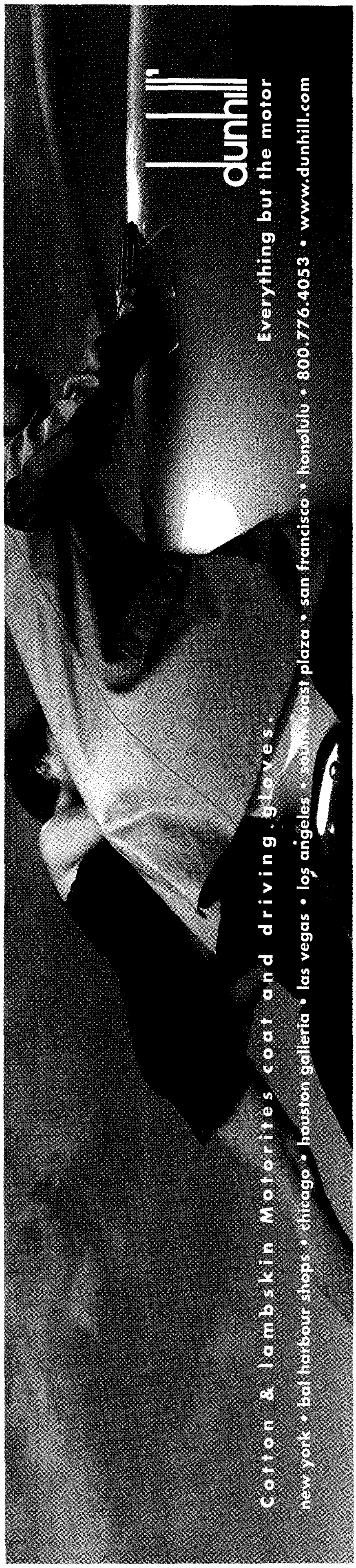
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lacquered combs and hairpins is among the highlights of the show, which also boasts a gorgeously austere seventeenth-century panel screen depicting a flock of crows, and a magnificent ceremonial helmet, also from the seventeenth century, "in the shape of a peach, with attached bison horns." Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and weekends, 11 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF SEX
233 Fifth Ave., at 27th St. (689-6337)—In a poorly calculated bid to add gravitas and convert skeptics, MoSex's first exhibit, **"NYC Sex: How New York City Transformed Sex in America,"** opens with accounts of the grisly murder of Helen Jewett, a nineteenth-century Manhattan prostitute. Like a school video on the dangers of unprotected sex, that cautionary tale of ugly consequences, recounted in lurid newspaper clippings, casts a pall over what follows, making the vitrines dedicated to police raids at the Russian baths or to the production of "Deep Throat" seem even darker than they might. Lighter displays—Blaze Starr's mirrored and tasselled costumes and the chronicle of Annie Sprinkle's fairy-tale rise from civilian to porn star to sexologist—are heartening, but unconvincing in the context. Those who find themselves averting their eyes can enjoy the procession of studious visitors watching hardcore porn to the strains of the Village People and the chagrin of slightly baffled security guards. Through July 3. (Open Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 to 6:30, and Thursdays through Sundays, 10 to 9. Museumgoers must be at least eighteen years old.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (864-4500)—A dashing show of works made since 1995 confirms Gary Simmons's eminence among artists of political bent and installational panache. The thirty-eight-year-old's signature style of smeared-chalk-and-charcoal drawings has grown steadily subtler, lately favoring poetic images—clouds, stars, fir trees, roller coasters, a gazebo—whose meanings hang fire. The effect is laconic, heart-tugging, and elegant. A vast "blackboard" wall drawing of two toppling or, perhaps, flying skyscrapers alludes to September 11th, tenderly: the images suggest ghosts or angels of buildings. Elsewhere, Simmons, who has left off skewering stereotypes of African-Americans, indulges in some stereotyping of his own. Large sculptures of a moonshine still and a pair of clownish but menacing hillbillies, rendered as motorized bobble-head dolls, make fun of backwoods white culture in the South. Through Jan. 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

PAUL CADMUS
The artist's signature sailors give way to nudes in meticulous, beautiful drawings somewhere between beefcake pinups and classical figure studies. Forty years of drawings, from the fifties to the nineties, are on view, all rendered in crayon on colored or hand-toned paper, lending them an Old Master aspect. Cadmus invokes Ingres's "Grande Odalisque" (Chelsea-boy version) as model after model turns his well-muscled back to the viewer. Through Nov. 9. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

SHIRLEY JAFFE
The finest of Jaffe's sprightly new paintings is called "Bruit d'Été"; it suggests jazz on a breezy day in Île de France. The seventy-nine-year-old artist, an American in Paris since 1949, keeps fresh a Stuart Davis-like style of cubistic abstraction, with hard-edged, brightly colored lines, planes, and curlicues embedded in a fat white. She risks chaos, but it's glad chaos. And when Jaffe gets her rhythms and intervals just right, as in "Bruit," the result is a late-entry masterpiece of modernism. Through Nov. 16. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

DONALD JUDD
A mini-retrospective, focussing on two series of boxes by the box master, made from 1977 through 1989 of anodized aluminum, brass, copper, steel, Plexiglas, and plywood. Muted, saturated colors—yellow, purple, blue, red—flicker in the deceptively angled depths of these wall-mounted constructions. Their canonically minimalist concerns are material, balance, and variation. But viewed at this late date, the sculptures seem to refer slyly to televisions, bookshelves, windows, and even paintings. Through Nov. 16. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

WILLIAM TUCKER
Great new lumps by the important English-born sculptor, who lives in Massachusetts. "Messenger," in plaster, is more than ten feet high and more or less describes an upturned foot; it suggests other things, too, such as a fluffy thunderhead. The gnarled bronze "Emperor" (with an unusual, ravishing smoky patina) and "The Hero at Evening" are heads with faces, when you look at them with that in mind. But representation is only one note in Tucker's complex chords of monumental-

TABLES FOR TWO

ÉPICERIE/CAFÉ CHARBON
168-170 Orchard St. (420-7520)—A trio of cinematic storefronts sprang up this July, on the corner of Orchard and Stanton Streets. They opened just in time for Bastille Day, so perhaps it's not surprising that the newcomers were French: Tabac, Épicerie, and Café Charbon. Tabac, sandwiched between the other two, looks like a Parisian newsstand—the glass front displays neat rows of film, magazines, and cigarettes—but it's only a decoy foyer on the way to the bar, Café Charbon, and the bistro, Épicerie. No matter; very few patrons show up without cigarettes.

Café Charbon is a dark, embracing room with high, wood-beamed ceilings and a long bar. In the back, a d.j. plays an eclectic blend of music, from Frankie Valli to the Violent Femmes; people dance in their seats as they eat their *moules*. Stage left, a wall opens onto Épicerie, a cozy place with Camembert-colored walls, wide louvred blinds, and votive candles. The patrons there can watch the goings on in Café Charbon (and vice versa), and the same rich, savory, and low-cost menu is served in both places, until midnight on weekdays, and until four in the morning on weekends—salvation for local revellers sober enough to remember that steak frites at 2 A.M. can prevent an aching head at noon.

The two establishments draw a bohemian crowd, but the menu is refreshingly peasant: spicy olives, cheese croquettes, crumbly homemade duck pâté. *Escargots à l'ail* loll on tiny butter-drenched pieces of toast, and *saucisson sec* comes on a white plate, as is. There's even a selection of *plats ouvriers*—working man's specials such as sautéed kidneys or sausages with cabbage—very simple entrées for about twelve dollars. But it wouldn't be French without a frill or two. The confit of duck and browned potatoes shows up in the saucepan it was cooked in, and one of the desserts, the *omelette Norvégienne*, is positively libertine: a *boule* of ice cream, lightly caked, dropped in meringue, and flambéed tableside with Grand Marnier. You could put it out and eat it, or use it to light your cigarette. (Open daily for lunch and dinner; Fridays and Saturdays, until 4 A.M. Entrées $10-$21.)

—*Liesl Schillinger*

ity and touch, mass and buoyancy. Through Dec. 7. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951.)

"SURFACE TO SURFACE"
This aggressively snazzy group show, curated by the critic Max Henry, brings together eight artists of different generations who employ glamorously glossy or svelte surfaces. A John McCracken red plank gleams askance at an orange-ish Richard Prince car hood; a wall unit of Wiener Werkstätte-inspired white glass vessels by Josiah McElheny takes issue with shelves of stainless-steel items by Haim Steinbach. An iron "progression" wall piece from 1969 by Donald Judd seems at first like a sober party-pooper, but its lustrous blue, lacquered finish gives it away. Through Dec. 21. (Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929.)

Short List

JOSEPH CORNELL
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-4997.
Through Dec. 20.

MARKUS LÜPERTZ
Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550.
Through Nov. 16.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

AMY ADLER
To make the work in "Unknown," Adler advertised around L.A. for a blond actress in her mid-thirties who could impersonate Adler in the artist's own home, sitting on her bed, playing with her cat, gazing into the camera that she wields. Adler turned the resulting photos into life-size pastel drawings, which she then rephotographed and destroyed, so that the only documentation from the impersonation sessions are photos of drawings of photos. Conceptually, this seamless series of removes and replacements makes an adroit comment on the ability of images to "know" their subjects. The fact remains, however, that the pictures—with their girl-next-door blandness and careful, uniform mark—aren't that compelling to look at. Through Nov. 23. (Casey Kaplan, 416 W. 14th St. 645-7335.)

R. CRUMB
This show of finished ink drawings for comics by the weird master has the cheesy air of collectibles marketing—but it's great. At a time when drawing is back in fine-art favor (see MOMA QNS), it's useful to recall that Crumb has practiced it brilliantly, with formal bravura and blistering imagination, for nearly half a century. The selection of works highlights his feminine ideal: dainty girlishness above the waist, rolling thunder below. The anti-guru Mr. Natural stars in his own biography, subtitled "From Shack to Chateau." To come across Crumb's roaring stuff in Chelsea stirs pity for the timorous frailties of most other artists. Through Nov. 9. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.)

STEVE DI BENEDETTO
Dazzling color pencil drawings that look like illustrations of rapture and pulse with the visual equivalent of reverb. At times the recurring images—octopuses, helicopters, Ferris wheels—suggest black-light posters for alchemists (see Anastasius Kircher's maps of the subterranean earth). But the centrifugal compositions have a formal complexity that takes them beyond the merely psychedelic. The spinning wheels and chopper blades call to mind the halos and angels in Giotto's "Lamentation." Through Nov. 9. (Eller, 526 W. 25th St. 206-6411.)

ANDREW FORGE
A memorial show of paintings by the distinguished critic and teacher, who died this year at the age of seventy-eight. Forge made dense, Pointillist abstractions that feel vaguely woodsy, as if alluding to dappled glades and forest light. Their keynote is painstaking process, for both the painter and the viewer. Rather pepless colors—sombre greens and blues, dusky yellows and oranges, not much red—combine without quite harmonizing. The pictures

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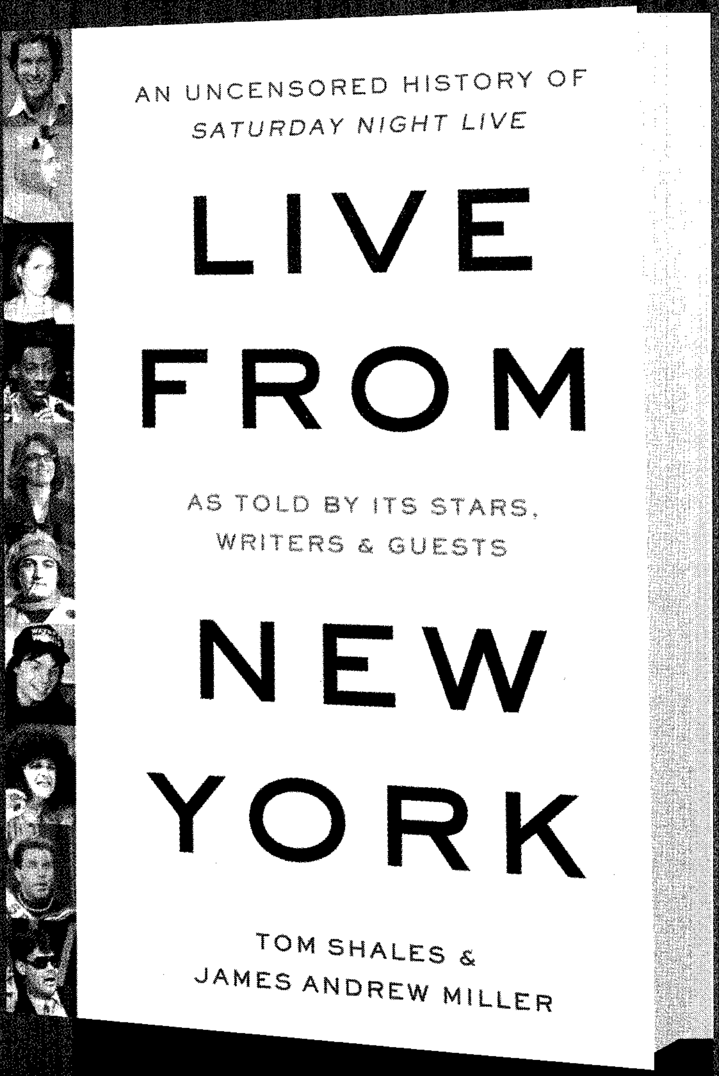

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ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

In SoHo

"Well, I guess it's for . . . a couch?" a saleswoman at the Rem Koolhaas-designed **PRADA** store in SoHo (575 Broadway; 334-8888) says, showing off a fox-fur pillow ($2,360) so enormous that she can barely get her arms around it. Though any number of delightfully nutty, luxurious items join the Prada pillow this season—Lucite Cinderella sandals with scarlet velvet heels ($430), evening clutches made of black satin instead of Prada's traditional black nylon ($555)—the company has taken the bold step of reintroducing hits from the past. Thus a woman who longed for a mirror-bedecked chiffon tunic ($5,740) but didn't buy it the first time around now has a second chance; the fluttery lipstick-patterned camiknickers ($1,255), whose design owes something to the Surrealists, have also resurfaced.

No one over at **LOUIS VUITTON** (116 Greene St.; 866-884-8866) appears to be heeding the news that logos are out of fashion—most of the merchandise incorporates the house's insignia with varying degrees of subtlety. Though Vuitton calls them Miami loafers, a pair of gentlemen's slip-ons ($435), made of calfskin and featuring a miniature version of the Damier-check pattern, would be equally at home in a shooting box in Scotland. In its ongoing efforts to prove how young and hip it is, the company offers nail polish in bottles that look like bigger Damier checks, packed two to the box in Elvira-friendly color combinations like beige with green ($67). But, of course, the firm's dignified roots are never far away: along with the bowling bags and messenger totes is a solidly built fitted case that the store claims is intended for cosmetics but which looks for all the world like an old-fashioned train case ($2,020).

VIVIENNE WESTWOOD (71 Greene St.; 334-1500) may have restyled herself as a serious student of philosophy, but her clothes still appeal to people more interested in Eminem than in Emerson. A man's polka-dot cardigan ($540) with graduating dots appears intended for a latter-day Sebastian Flyte; a pair of coquettish pink-and-black Argyle tights ($175), which Westwood designed in collaboration with Wolford, exhibits the punk-courtesan sensibility that has defined this designer since she set up shop in London's Chelsea three decades ago.

Though a number of SoHo shops appear, even on Saturday afternoon, to be fairly customer-deprived, this is not the case at **FLYING A** (169 Spring St.; 965-9090), where an international throng of teen-agers gleefully squeeze themselves into the smallest possible jeans and tees. Still, the stars of the show are the vintage flight bags ($69 to $99). According to the shop's manager, herself clad in a pair of tiny jeans, the store doesn't bother to empty the bags before they hit the counters; hidden treasures occasionally surface. When a red-and-white TWA carry-on yields a well-thumbed deck of playing cards, the clerk gets excited. "They're from the seventies!" she says. "I play a lot of cards, and I can tell by the way the joker looks."

Despite the high-priced Balenciagas and Jimmy Choos, there's a wilder spirit afoot at **KIRNA ZABÊTE** (96 Greene St.; 941-9656), where posters on the fitting-room doors read, "I must not chase the boys," scrawled repeatedly in a childish hand. Downstairs, there's a selection of extravagant cashmere accessories from a company called Fifi & Romeo. An infant's baseball sweater in yellow with white sleeves is appliquéd with a circus monkey ($140); a similar pullover for a dog is turquoise and pink with red turtle decorations ($225). The canine version is more expensive than the infant's, but, then again, the dog will probably wear it longer.

Slightly older children might opt for Lilliputian versions of their parents' **MARNI** clothes (161 Mercer St.; 343-3912). Marni's adult clothes are famous for their ratty elegance—if they look good coming out of a nightclub, shouldn't they work a similar magic in the sandbox? A toddler's skirt combines panels of faded floral fabric and flannel mattress ticking ($290); a deliberately wrinkled smock dress is printed with pink-and-purple bubbles ($320).

Oh, my.
Thanks, Grandma.
HOT DAWG!
SPELLING CAN BE COOL!
CHEESE-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB DECEMBER
FOOT MASSAGER
1,000,000 PIECE JIGSAW PUZZLE
DRIED APRICOTS 20 LBS.

ROZ CHAST

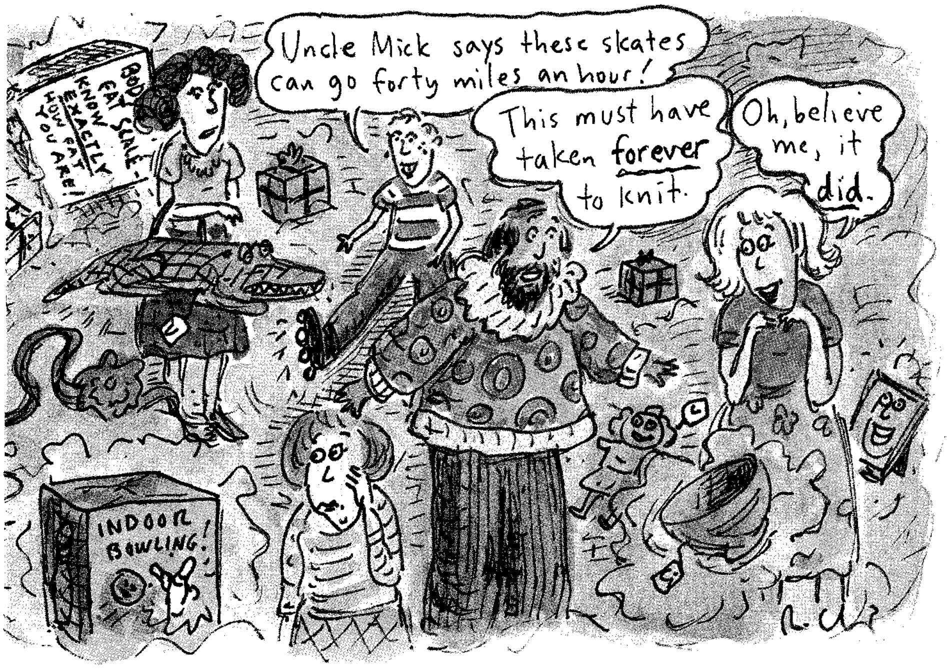
For these tykes' design-sensitive parents, the **MOMA DESIGN STORE** (81 Spring St.; 646-613-1367) offers a bright-red Noah's ark ($50) that manages to be tasteful yet is still fun to play with. The ark is hardly MOMA's only interesting item: along with the George Nelson wall clocks and the Noguchi dishes, there's a spectacular pearl-studded necklace of fluted-metal mesh in a hue halfway between gold and silver that turns out to be made of the material used for oil filters ($98).

Whatever you can say about SoHo, it still has stores that induce a deep longing for things like trash receptacles. The can in question, by the Danish company Vipp, is made of stainless steel, and it's very chic, especially in a lovely shade of yellow just this side of crème fraîche ($175). It's at **WATERWORKS** (469 Broome St.; 966-0605), an all-white emporium devoted to the pleasure of the bath. The shop has gone to the trouble of reproducing a dresser set, the sort of thing that graced bureaus a hundred years ago. Now it's made of cellulose acetate instead of ivory, and the six pieces range from a nailbrush ($32) to a hand mirror ($64).

No one would impugn the beauty of the merchandise at **MOSS** (146 Greene St.; 204-7100), but what makes the store so enjoyable is that its commitment to good design is wed to an irrepressible quirkiness. Everything is displayed in glass cases with little cards offering explanations: next to the LOMO camera ($200), a Russian pre-digital with a cheap plastic case and a great lens, the text tells you that at one time the Soviet government thought this was something "every respectable Communist citizen should own." Though there are plenty of coffee- and teapots here that hew to refined aesthetic standards, camp makes occasional inroads. The Vesuvio espresso-maker, made of cast aluminum and enamel, has red licking flames and a gray lid shaped like drifting smoke ($339).

Though lots of people have intimated that SoHo isn't SoHo anymore and that odd little shops haven't survived the onslaught of the chains, once you turn off the main drags and explore the area, things look a bit different. At **MICHELE VARIAN** (33 Crosby St.; 343-0033), a narrow store on a cobblestone street, the pillows ($100-$450) bear only the dimmest resemblance to that fox number at Prada. Varian got her start in the fashion business, and a careful, delicate eye is evident in many of her jewel-toned Dupioni-silk creations. Everything is made in the back of the shop, and all of the cushions have names: Marguerita features elaborate appliquéd flowers, and Totem has medallions that look like the snowflakes children used to cut from folded paper during those long-lost snowy winters of holidays past.

—*Lynn Yaeger*


BODY FAT SCALE - KNOW EXACTLY HOW FAT YOU ARE!
Uncle Mick says these skates can go forty miles an hour!
This must have taken forever to knit.
Oh, believe me, it did.
INDOOR BOWLING!

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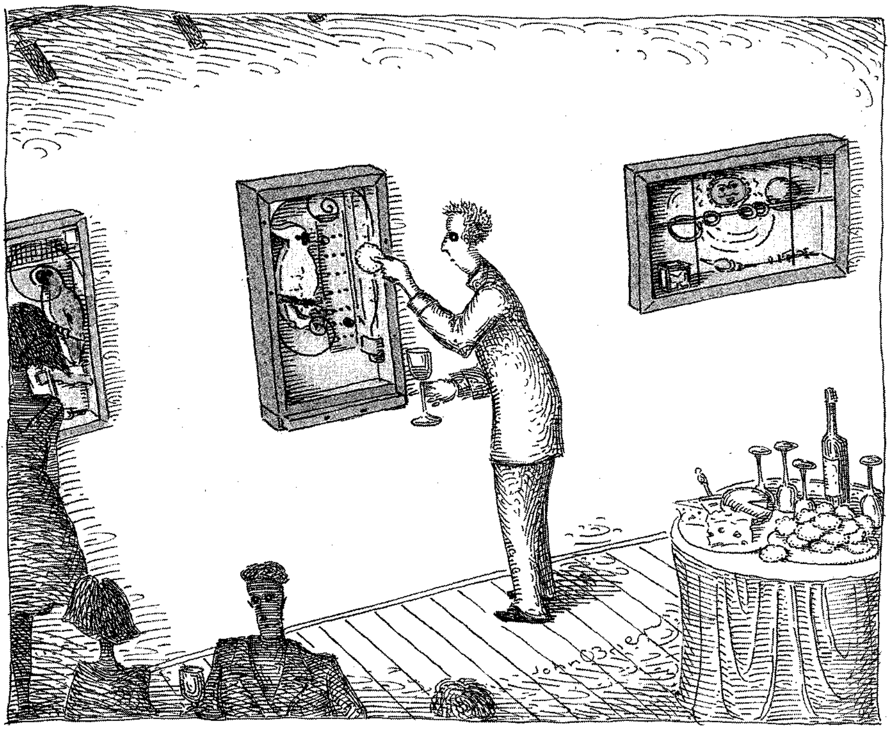
almost glow and almost shimmer, but some odd, stern compunction inhibits them. The result is a state of poised and inexhaustible irresolution. Through Nov. 20. (Robert Miller, 624 W. 26th St. 366-4774.)

MARK MANDERS
The drawings, objects, and films in Manders's ongoing "Self Portrait as Building" suggest a tour through the artist's unconscious, or a Surrealist open house. In the central gallery, a sculpture made of five tea bags sits on the floor while a flat, humanoid form reclines on a steel chaise longue covered in clay. A pencil dangles from a wire over an orifice that could be a mouth; it evokes language, but also something more sinister. Elsewhere a wooden wardrobe is tucked in a corner and sealed shut, as if to keep a monster in a closet. Through Nov. 9. (Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7779.)

ALEXANDER ROSS
Plasticine, painter Alexander Ross points out, is nothing but an oil-based clay, a thicker, stiffer cousin to oil paint. Ross's oil paintings exploit the resemblance, rendering with hyper-realist exactitude a crew of pinched and nobby green plasticine lumps. The resulting "portraits" certainly suggest life-forms, though they oscillate between organic and alien, from moss or seaweed to pixellated animations. What remains constant is his pleasure in paint's substance, his tireless exploration of fat, fleet, crosshatched brushstrokes, and his exuberant allegiance to a palette of verdant artificial hues. Through Nov. 16. (Feature, 530 W. 25th St. 675-7772.)

ROBERT RYMAN
The snowman returns in a luxuriant temper, with paintings whose frosty or creamy, brush-whipped whites interact discreetly with undercolors or the hue of raw canvas or linen. As is his wont, Ryman fusses eloquently with relations of paint masses to the shapes of blocky stretchers and, here and there, with how the stretchers are affixed to the wall. Familiarity with his pleasant worries makes one wonder how he could ever have been deemed minimalist. The style of this show is bashful baroque. Through Nov. 9. (Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 421-3292.)



Joseph Cornell's boxes, at Stone.

JOHN O'BRIEN

KARIN SANDER
For Karin Sander's installation, sixty German, Swiss, and Austrian women named Karin Sander each contribute one informal portrait photograph. The women, from twenty-four to eighty-nine, appear painting a ceiling, celebrating a wedding, lying in a deck chair. They offer themselves as a very specific kind of Everywoman. Sander the artist, meanwhile, deftly updates the archetype of her artistic forebear, August Sander (1876-1964), whose monumental series "Man in the Twentieth Century" sought to document the faces of common German "types" (workmen, tradesmen, neighbors). The younger Sander's project is something of a one-liner, but when considered in the light of her elder's example, that line grows into a sort of family tree. Through Nov. 9. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

KATIA SANTIBAÑEZ
Imagine that you are lying semi-nude upon the grass, holding a kaleidoscope, which you train upon the lawn but occasionally sweep over your own body (or that of someone lying next to you) so that body hair and blades of grass merge and twirl into prismatic geometries. Then imagine that your sensibility as a painter demands a tightly controlled, architectural rendering of this sensual premise, with green blade-hairs sprouting in rows against stark-white backgrounds. Working multiple variations on her simple theme, Santibañez directs her hints of pastoral into a clinical mode—unruly yet static, lush but orderly. Through Nov. 16. (P.P.O.W, 555 W. 25th St. 647-1044.)

Short List

PETER CAIN / PAUL FEELEY
Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.
Through Nov. 23.

WALTON FORD
Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 26th St. 563-4474.
Through Nov. 16.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

MARY HEILMANN
The artist's brightly colored, deceptively casual paintings have always had a wily edge, sending a gleeful Bronx cheer in the direction of sanctimonious abstraction. In an ongoing effort to take high art down a peg, Heilmann installs paintings alongside lamps, furniture, and ceramics, all of her own design. The contrast between the gallery's high-tech, steel-mesh walls and the homespun aesthetic of the oversized teacup, polka-dot lampshade, and striped slipcover strikes just the right note of irreverence. Through Nov. 24. (Schachter Contemporary, 14 Charles Lane. 807-6669.)

CLAUDIA AND JULIA MÜLLER
Rummaging through flea markets for other people's pictures is a well-worn strategy (Gerhard Richter's "Atlas" pops to mind), and these Swiss sisters do little to invigorate the practice. Their tepid New York début features sepia-toned watercolors based on their snapshot archive. Most contain some form of masquerade: trick-or-treaters dressed up as Hasidic Jews, a couple in clown masks, and, in one heavy-handed joke, a girl in a cosmetic mud mask. Elsewhere, a video projection pokes simplistic fun at traditional families as drawings of black, white, and Asian family members dissolve into one another in a politically correct composite. Through Nov. 30. (Maccarone, 45 Canal St. 431-4977.)

Short List

LIZA LOU
Deitch Projects Annex, 18 Wooster St.
343-7300. Through Nov. 30.

ROSIE LEE TOMPKINS
Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.
Through Dec. 14.

PHOTOGRAPHY

VALÉRIE BELIN
The first United States exhibition of this Paris-based black-and-white specialist allows us to glimpse the disparate subjects that have drawn Belin's disciplined attention over the past five years. Studies of Murano-glass mirrors exploit the intense contrast between silver-white shine and the blackest of black backgrounds, resulting in a disturbingly heightened sense of brittleness. Her bodybuilders are over the top and gleaming, simian and comic, while a series of Moroccan brides engulfed by their pearl- and gem-encrusted gowns exude a powerful pessimism. The most unsettling images are a horizontal set of four oversized close-up mug shots of extremely dark-skinned women who stare into the camera with such a cold look of appraisal that it's a relief that photographs can't speak. Through Nov. 16. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.)

CHAN CHAO
There's an unexpectedly conversational, almost casual tone to Chan Chao's lush color portraits of Burmese dissidents and freedom fighters. The young men look as though they've been interrupted, mid-day, or mid-life, by the photographer, and there's a lazy insouciance to their poses. Two boys—one in bluejeans, the other in a sarong, plucking a guitar—could be any teen-agers, anywhere; only their wary eyes suggest a more troubling reality. That weary watchfulness suffuses all the pictures, as does something more threatening: in one of the show's most enigmatic portraits, a handsome young man with a faint half-smile and a faded tattoo jauntily clutches the bamboo handle of what just might be a machete. Through Nov. 30. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

TOMER GANIHAR
There's elegy to the ecstasy in Tomer Ganihar's photographs of young Israeli party-goers who frequent trance-music night clubs and gather for four-day marathon raves at the Dead Sea. Hebrew on the walls around these huge color prints says things like "New aesthetics. New courage," and, incredibly, the images live up to the mantras. "Raving in the Negev Desert" vibrates with a mystical presence; its impressionistic blurs unite youthful bodies and ancient sand. "The New Synagogues" and "Becoming a Generation" both portray throbbing crowds of fused forms, but neither match the impact of "God Is in Our Clubs." Here, a precarious ray of heavenly light illuminates a single, white-shirted acolyte, while the far reaches of the frame dissolve into chaos and darkness. Through Nov. 30. (Rodgers/9W, 529 W. 20th St. 414-9810.)

DAVID YURMAN

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MADISON AT 64TH STREET 212 752 4255

LAUREN GREENFIELD / JUDITH JOY ROSS
Sex—its promise and threat—sticks like a second skin to the mostly affluent, mostly teen-age subjects of Greenfield's dizzying documentation of female rites of passage. In Greenfield's photos, printed in the supersaturated pinks and blues of a Britney Spears video, girls visit fat camps, endure breast-enhancement surgery, and lie in tanning beds; they're self-possessed and awkward in equal measure. Among the photos—which together could easily comprise a leaden (and rather predictable) commentary on the excesses of American girlhood—are some startling juxtapositions: in one, a group of smiling, glossy-haired students at a private girls' school hoist their candy-colored bridesmaids' dresses to reveal lacy garter belts. In another, an African-American teen-ager hikes her skirt to reveal her legs to a trio of white judges at a model search; the historical allusions are as sad as the expression of resignation on the girl's face. Unlike Greenfield's pampered beauties, Ross's working-class girls are wary in front of the camera, and there's a heartbreaking fragility to their stillness. Among Ross's pictures is one of a military woman, which recalls, in its gravitas, Matthew Brady's portraits of Civil War soldiers. Through Nov. 30. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

ABELARDO MORELL
The new work by this well-established photographer mixes quiet elegance with a sly wit. For years Morell has created site-specific camera obscuras, projecting, in this case, an upside-down London Tower Bridge onto his hotel room's wall and a view of the Thames into a stark, empty office. These pictures compress space and time and turn what's outside inward with a grand flourish, while Morell's other work is more intimate and less sweeping. A book that was waterlogged in a flooded library fills the frame and becomes a wildly contorted explosion of now useless paper. Images of a forest of pencils on end and of currency folded and paper-clipped in a neo-origami style prove that Morell is a masterful printer as well a world-class tinkerer. Through Dec. 7. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

Short List

DAVID HILL AND ROBERT ADAMSON
Kraus, 25 E. 77th St. 794-2064.
Through Nov. 15.

SYLVIA PLACHY
Bateman, 560 Broadway. 925-7951.
Through Nov. 30.

GARY WINOGRAND
International Center of Photography,
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000.
Through Dec. 1.

"INVISIBLE BEINGS"
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.
Through Nov. 14.

"MÜTTER MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHS"
Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.
Through Nov. 16.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Nov. 7 at 2: A sale of prints that begins with a session devoted to the Old Masters, including works by Dürer, Canaletto, Rembrandt, and Piranesi (a fourteen-plate first edition of "Carceri d'Invenzione"), and continues with a selection of prints by such North American moderns as Hopper, Kuniyoshi, and Tamayo. ♦ Nov. 8 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Two sessions devoted to European artists, including works by Chagall, Degas, Matisse (a complete portfolio of "Jazz"), and Picasso and a broad selection of works by Munch. ♦ Nov. 9 at 10:15 A.M.: The final session, including works by such contemporary artists as Close, Lichtenstein, Frankenthaler, and Stella. ♦ Nov. 12 at 7: The first session of a two-day sale of contemporary art begins with an impressive cache of American works from a private collection, including major paintings by Gorky, Kline, Diebenkorn, de Kooning ("Orestes," expected to bring up to ten million dollars), and Thiebaud. The sale continues with property from various owners, including works by Warhol, Richter, Rauschenberg, Guston, and Bacon ("Triptych: Three Studies of Henrietta Moraes"). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
Nov. 6 at 7: The first session of a two-day sale of Impressionist and modern art features paintings by Cézanne, Monet ("Le Bassin aux Nymphéas," estimated to bring up to fifteen million dollars), Caillebotte, and Modigliani, along with sculptures by Rodin and Maillol. ♦ Nov. 7 at 10 A.M.: Impressionist and modern works on paper. ♦ Nov. 7 at 10 A.M. and 2: The final session, including paintings by Van Gogh, Renoir, Picabia, and Soutine. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

PHILLIPS
Nov. 11 at 7 and Nov. 12 at 10:30 A.M.: Two sessions of contemporary art, including works by Ruscha, Oldenburg, Warhol ("Silver Liz," estimated to bring up to six million dollars), Richter, and Basquiat. (3 W. 57th St. 940-1200.)

DOYLE
Nov. 6 at 10 A.M.: Couture, textiles, and fashion accessories from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including pieces by Fortuny (a blue silk peplos dress), Halston, and Pingat. ♦ Nov. 12 at 10 A.M.: Books and autographs. An auction of Old Master, modern, and contemporary prints immediately follows the sale, including works by such artists as Braque, Miró, Cadmus, and Nevelson. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN
Nov. 6 at 3: A sale of Old Master prints, including important works by Dürer, Rembrandt, and Piranesi. ♦ Nov. 7 at 10:30 A.M. and 2:30: Prints from the Old Master era to the twentieth century, by such artists as Dürer, Goya, Kandinsky, and Stuart Davis. ♦ Nov. 11 at 10:30 A.M.: Travel posters. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

I.F.P.D.A. PRINT FAIR
Eighty-seven dealers offer prints from around the world. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 674-6095. Nov. 7-10.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
The only good reason to revive **"Il Pirata,"** the potboiler that put Bellini on the bel-canto map, is to provide a showcase for all-out vocal virtuosity. Renée Fleming's Imogene comes up to the mark for her floating pianissimos, daredevil agility, and physical glamour, but her bright, blooming sound lacks the dark shadows that made the role such a showstopper for Maria Callas. Marcello Giordani, in the daunting title part, cranks out most of the top notes reliably but is less secure elsewhere. Dwayne Croft, though, makes a distinguished enemy in the role of Ernesto, and Bruno Campanella provides sensitive accompaniment in the pit. (Nov. 6 at 8.) ♦ With Richard Zeller replacing Croft. (Nov. 9 at 8.) ♦ The Met's controversial production of **"Il Trovatore,"** originally created by Graham Vick in 2000 but no longer bearing his name, returns to the repertory with some changes in sets and staging. Zvetelina Vassileva, Larissa Diadkova, Franco Farina, and Bruno Caproni head the cast, but don't be surprised if Willard White, the underrated African-American bass, steals the show as Ferrando; Frédéric Chaslin, making his house début, conducts. (Nov. 7 at 8 and Nov. 12 at 7:30.) ♦ **"Aida,"** with Michele Crider, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, Alexandru Agache, and Matti Salminen; Marco Armiliato conducts. (Nov. 8 at 8.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Mary Mills, Denyce Graves (as Carmen, her signature role), Richard Leech, and Ludovic Tézier; Yves Abel. (Nov. 9 at 1:30.) ♦ Ruth Ann Swenson and Marcelo Álvarez, an effective pair in last season's "Rigoletto," return with bel-canto repertory, heading the cast for Donizetti's **"Lucia di Lammermoor."** Also with Anthony Michaels-Moore and John Relyea; Patrick Summers. (Nov. 11 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
True to its title, Chabrier's opéra bouffe **"L'Étoile"** (directed by Mark Lamos) has become the star of City Opera's adventurous but uneven fall season. Jeremy Sams's English translation may bring a touch of D'Oyly Carte to the libretto, but there is no masking the Gallic insouciance of this rarely performed gem, giddily magnified by Constance Hoffman's costumes, with their bold colors out of Toulouse-Lautrec, and the zany space-age sets and lighting of Andrew Lieberman and Robert Wierzel. Everybody sings and everybody dances, and everybody does it well, especially the versatile baritone Robert Orth, who renders the ridiculous King Ouf as a very fey variation on Mike Myers's Dr. Evil. Also with Lauren Skuce, Jennifer Rivera, and Kevin Burdette; George Manahan conducts. (Nov. 7 at 7:30.) ♦ **"Rigoletto,"** with Luz del Alba Rubio, Kirstin Chávez, Raul Hernandez, Louis Otey, and Peter Volpe; Willie Anthony Waters. (Nov. 8 at 8, Nov. 10 at 1:30, and Nov. 12 at 7:30.) ♦ Renata Scotto's production of **"La Traviata,"** with Elena Kolganova, Benjamin Warschawski, and Michael Corvino; Steuart Bedford. (Nov. 9 at 1:30.) ♦ **"The Marriage of Figaro,"** with Georgia Jarman, Nicolle Foland, Leah Summers, George Cordes, and Michael Chioldi; Gary Thor Wedow. (Nov. 9 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

AMATO OPERA
The East Village's feisty chamber-opera company presents the classic verist double bill of **"Cavalleria Rusticana"** and **"Pagliacci,"** directed and conducted by Anthony Amato. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 9 at 7:30 and Nov. 10 at 2:30. Through Nov. 24.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

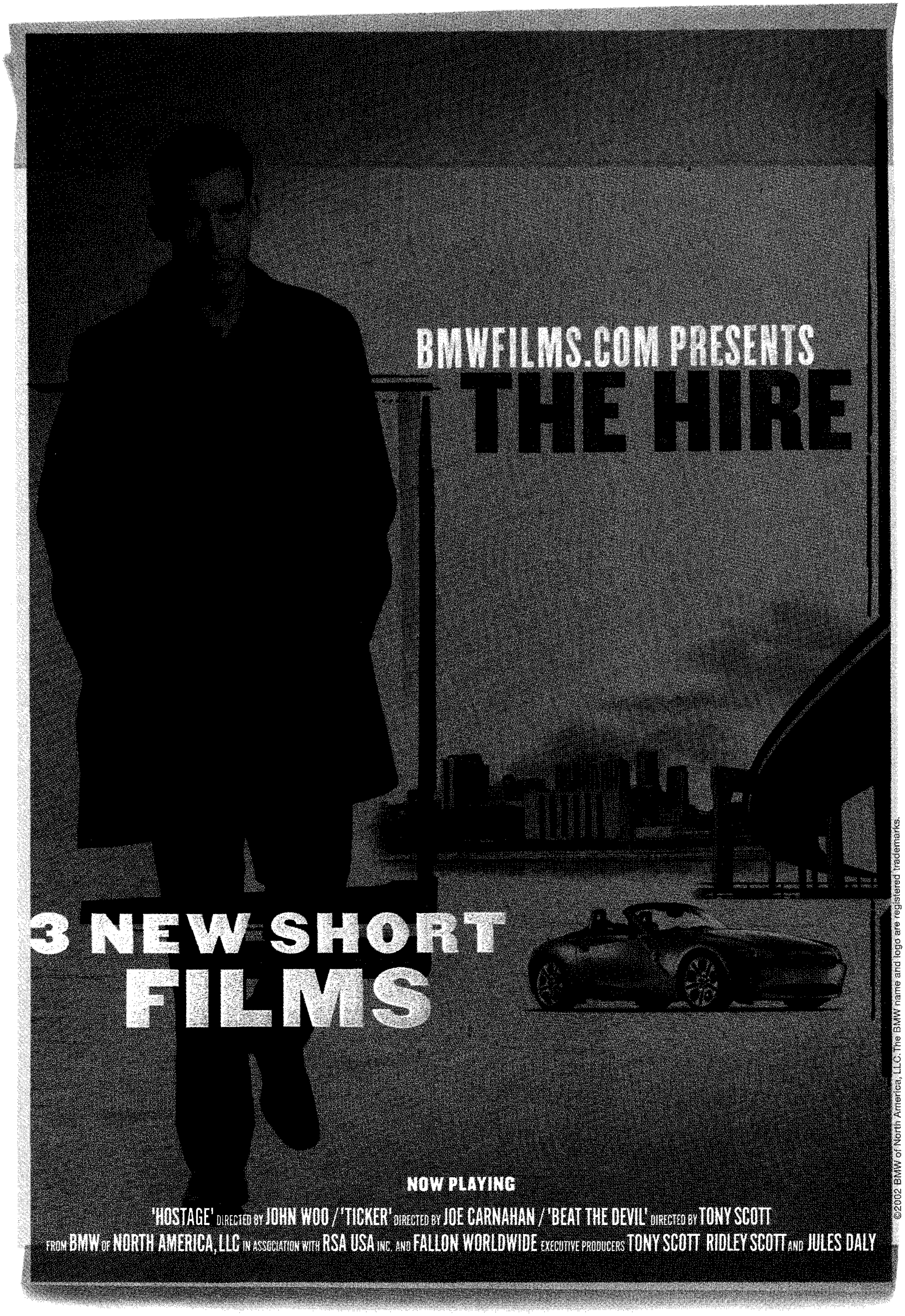
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Just back from its Asian tour, the orchestra performs the first of two weeks of concerts with its principal guest conductor, Colin Davis, who coaxes more warmth and elegance out of this group than just about anyone else. He begins with a program of Stravinsky ("Apollo"), Mozart (the Piano Concerto in G Major, K. 453, with Richard Goode), and Haydn (the Symphony No. 100, "Military"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5656. Nov. 7 and Nov. 12 at 7:30 and Nov. 8-9 at 8.)

MUNICH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Christoph Poppen, the adventurous violinist featured in the best-selling Bach disk "Morimur," brings the orchestra to the 92nd Street Y for a program that boldly contrasts classic and contemporary works, including music by Mozart, Mendelssohn (the String Symphony No. 10), Hartmann, and the Armenian composer Tigran Mansurian (the New York première of "And Then I Was in Time Again," a viola concerto written for Kim Kashkashian, who performs it here). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Nov. 6 at 8.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA
James DePriest conducts the group in an epic program featuring music by Britten (the "Four Sea Interludes," from "Peter Grimes"), Liszt, and Shostakovich (the Symphony No. 11, "The Year 1905," a grandiloquent masterpiece of socialist realism). (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 7 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY
Ned Rorem, renowned for his songs, has also been a prolific composer of orchestral works, which tend to have a leaner and more athletic style. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for "Air Music," which David Gilbert conducts on a program featuring works by Gershwin and Rachmaninoff (the "Symphonic Dances"). (Borden Auditorium, Broadway at 122nd St. Nov. 8 at 8. No tickets required.)

MILLER THEATRE:
"BACH AND THE CONCERTO"
The young phenoms of the Toradze Piano Studio perform the Bach solo-keyboard concertos, accompanied by the Gotham City Orchestra con-



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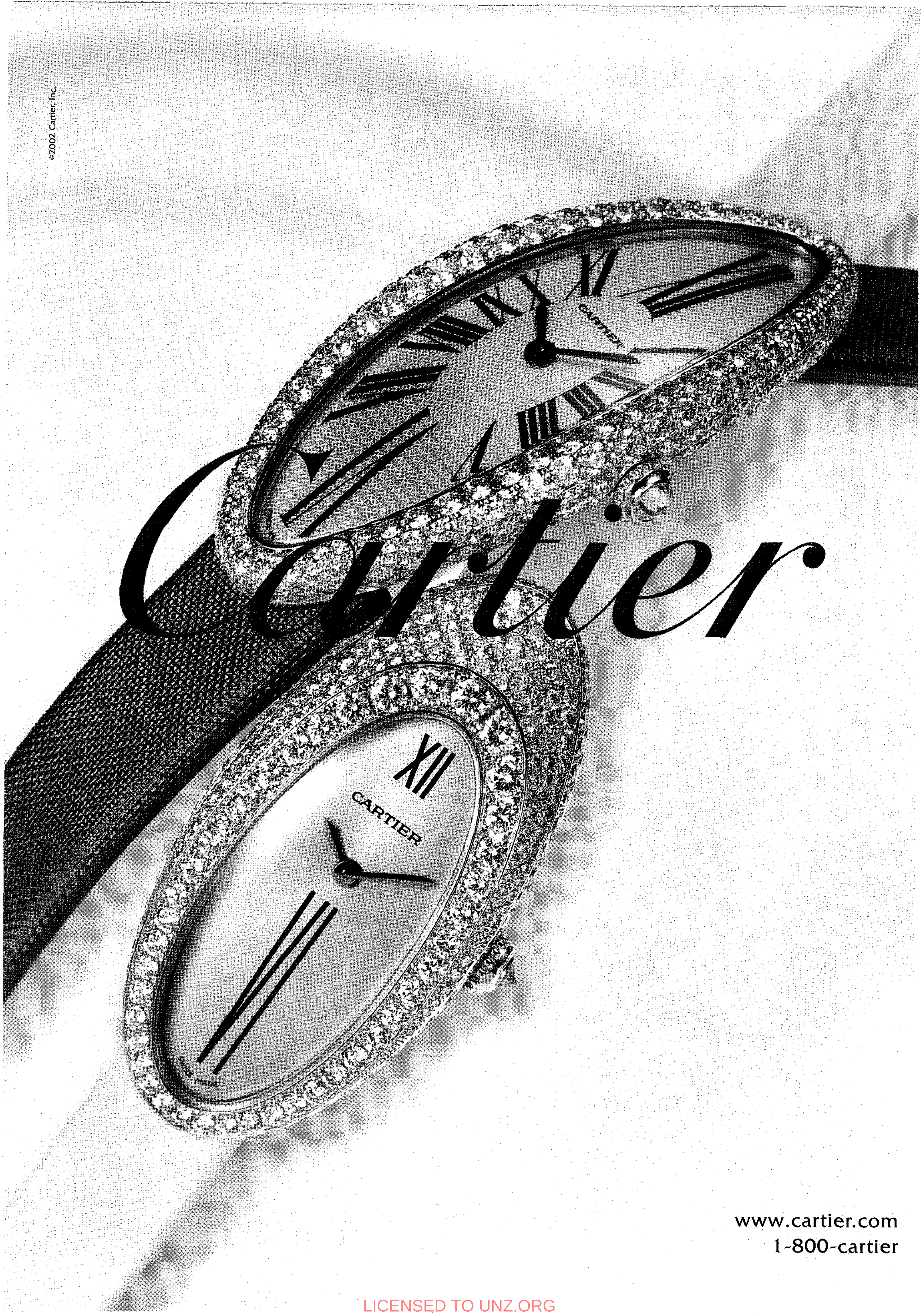
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ducted by the Miller's intrepid director, George Steel. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 9 at 8.)

ORQUESTRA DE SÃO PAULO
Sérgio and Odair Assad are the guests for a program of Villa-Lobos, Nobre (the Concerto for Two Guitars), and Brahms (the Second Symphony). John Neschling conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Nov. 10 at 3.)

MUSIC BEFORE 1800 SERIES: POMERIUM
Alexander Blachly leads his renowned early-music chorus in "Sparks of Sacred Fire," a concert of motets by Lassus and Monteverdi. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Nov. 10 at 4.)

PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
The Pittsburgh's music director, Mariss Jansons, who was recently appointed to succeed Riccardo Chailly as music director of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, may not be the most subtle of conductors, but he has an iron grasp of musical structure that's especially suited to the more forceful works of the European repertory—and he knows how to lead. He brings the orchestra to New York for a pair of concerts at Carnegie Hall. Nov. 12 at 8: Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Krystian Zimerman) begins a program of music by two great friends, Shostakovich (a suite of entr'actes from the opera "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District") and Britten. ♦ Nov. 13 at 8: The mezzo-soprano Jane Irwin is the guest for the New York première of Colin and David Matthews's orchestrations of seven lieder by Alma Mahler. Shostakovich dominates the rest of the program, both in his Symphony No. 10 and as the ghost that wanders through Rodion Shchedrin's "Dialogues with Shostakovich." (247-7800.)

RECITALS

ROCK HOTEL PIANOFEST
Nov. 6 at 8: Jerome Lowenthal, a veteran master of both classical and modern scores, offers a recital of Liszt, Mendelssohn (arranged by Liszt), Chopin, and Poulenc. Also a renowned pedagogue, he shares the program with two of his students, David Jalbert (playing Corigliano) and Andrew Van Oeyne (playing Stravinsky). (Society Hall, Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St.) ♦ Nov. 7 at 8: Jean-Yves Thibaudet, the flashy doyen of French keyboard style, plays music by Satie and other composers. (Angel Orensanz Center, 172 Norfolk St.) ♦ Nov. 8 at 8: The American pianist Diane Walsh performs music by Brahms, Mozart, Bartók, and Ravel ("Le Tombeau de Couperin"). (Society Hall.) (For tickets to all concerts, call 307-4100.)

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME CONCERTS
In the third of four concerts celebrating the achievements of the Academy's distinguished alumni, the piano trio Trio Solisti, and friends, perform music by Martin Bresnick, Paul Moravec (the jazzy "Mood Swings"), Bun-Ching Lam, and others. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 6 at 8.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Nov. 7 at 8: The St. Lawrence String Quartet offers works by Schubert (the Quintet in C Major, with the group's former cellist, Marina Hoover, helping out) and Shostakovich. ♦ Nov. 8 at 7: Mendelssohn, unlike some of his more tortured comrades in the Romantic movement, was sunny, well rounded, and well loved. Ruth Laredo begins her fourteenth season of "Concerts with Commentary" with a program exploring the links between Mendelssohn and Bach, the composer he championed so ardently, with the violinist Eric Wyrick and the cellist David Soyer as special guests. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

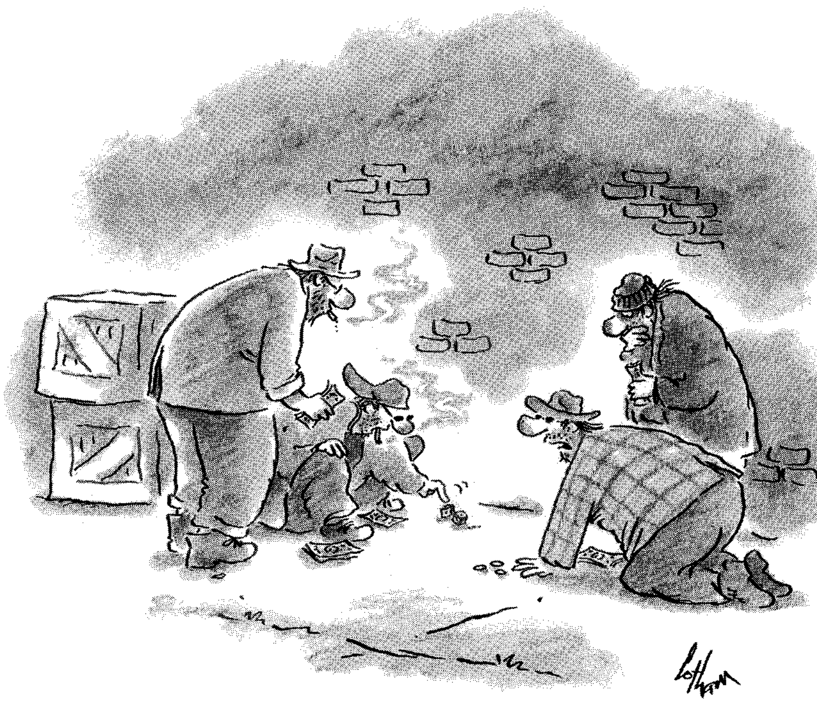
GRACE BUMBRY
The veteran soprano, who has been enjoying a comeback of late, offers a recital program in tribute to the great Marian Anderson. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008. Nov. 8 at 6:30.)

FRANK COTHAM

MAXIM VENGEROV
The impressive young Russian violinist goes out on a limb with a program of unaccompanied works, including four solo sonatas by Ysaÿe, Shchedrin's "Echo Sonata," and an unexpected choice from Bach, an arrangement of the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor for Organ. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 8 at 7:30.)

AN DIE MUSIK
Performing music by Haydn, Mozart (the Piano Quartet in G Minor), and Peter Schickele (his latest romp, "The Emperor's New Clothes," with the composer narrating). (Merkin Concert Hall. 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Nov. 10 at 4.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
A group of friends with a combustible mix of styles—including the violinists Ida Kavafian and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, the cellist Fred Sherry, and the clarinettist David Shifrin—come together for a program of Beethoven, Penderecki, and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet). (Nov. 10 at 5 and Nov. 12 at 7:30.) (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5788.)



"These dice aren't loaded—they're decaying." ("The Splendors of Decaying Celluloid," at the Angel Orensanz Foundation.)

KALICHSTEIN-LAREDO-ROBINSON TRIO
New York's piano trio of choice (plus a guest, the violinist Leila Josefowicz) offers music by Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Schumann (the Piano Quartet), along with a new work by David Del Tredici. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Nov. 12-13 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"THE SPLENDORS OF DECAYING CELLULOID"
The sleight-of-hand master Ricky Jay, the photographer Rosamond Purcell, and the documentary filmmaker Errol Morris join Bill Morrison for an evening's exploration of the magical thermoplastic once easily found at a theatre near you. The evening includes a screening of Morrison's musical film, "Decasia," which is made up of decaying nitrate-stock newsreels, old silent movies, and the like. Jay and Purcell, who recently collaborated on the book "Dice: Deception, Fate, and Rotten Luck," will also give a slide show about one of celluloid's other historical uses. (Angel Orensanz Foundation, 172 Norfolk St. Tickets at the door. For more information, call 998-2100. Nov. 11 at 7.)

READINGS
Nov. 6 at 7: Elisabeth Eaves offers selections from "Bare," her account of life as a stripper. (The Corner Bookstore, Madison Ave. at 93rd St. 831-3554.) ♦ Nov. 6 at 7:30: The Court TV personality Catherine Crier reads from her critique of the legal system, "The Case Against Lawyers." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 7 at 7: The poet David Ferry reads from and discusses his translation of the five-thousand-year-old epic "Gilgamesh." (Poets House, 72 Spring St., 2nd floor. 431-7920.) ♦ Nov. 7 at 7: Robert Creeley, Lydia Davis, Eliot Weinberger, and other poets pay tribute to Lorine Niedecker. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 229-5611.) ♦ Nov. 7 at 8: *McSweeney's* magazine presents an evening of Russian *skaz* fiction (a type of dramatic monologue), with Val Vinokurov. The writer Ben Greenman will also read his own Slavic-themed stories. (The Store, 429 Seventh Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 11 at 8: The British poet Geoffrey Hill reads from his work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.)

TALKS
Nov. 6 at 8: The Little Gray Book lecture series presents an evening about talking to strangers, with Joe Hagan (demonstrating an antique party game that involves measuring smiles), Lawrence Weschler (relating encounters surrounding the Serbian translation of his book "Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder"), Adam Mazmanian (reading letters from customers of his former employer, a large dot-com), and Hannah Tinti (reading a passage about grave robbers from her forthcoming novel). (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg. 718-782-5188.) ♦ Nov. 7 at 7: The writer Phillip Lopate interviews the realist painter Rackstraw Downes. (New Museum, 583 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 11 at 6:30: The translator Walter Harrelson and the printer Andrew Hoyem present an illustrated lecture on the history of reproducing the Bible. (Sockman Lounge, Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Dr. For more information, call 870-2227.)

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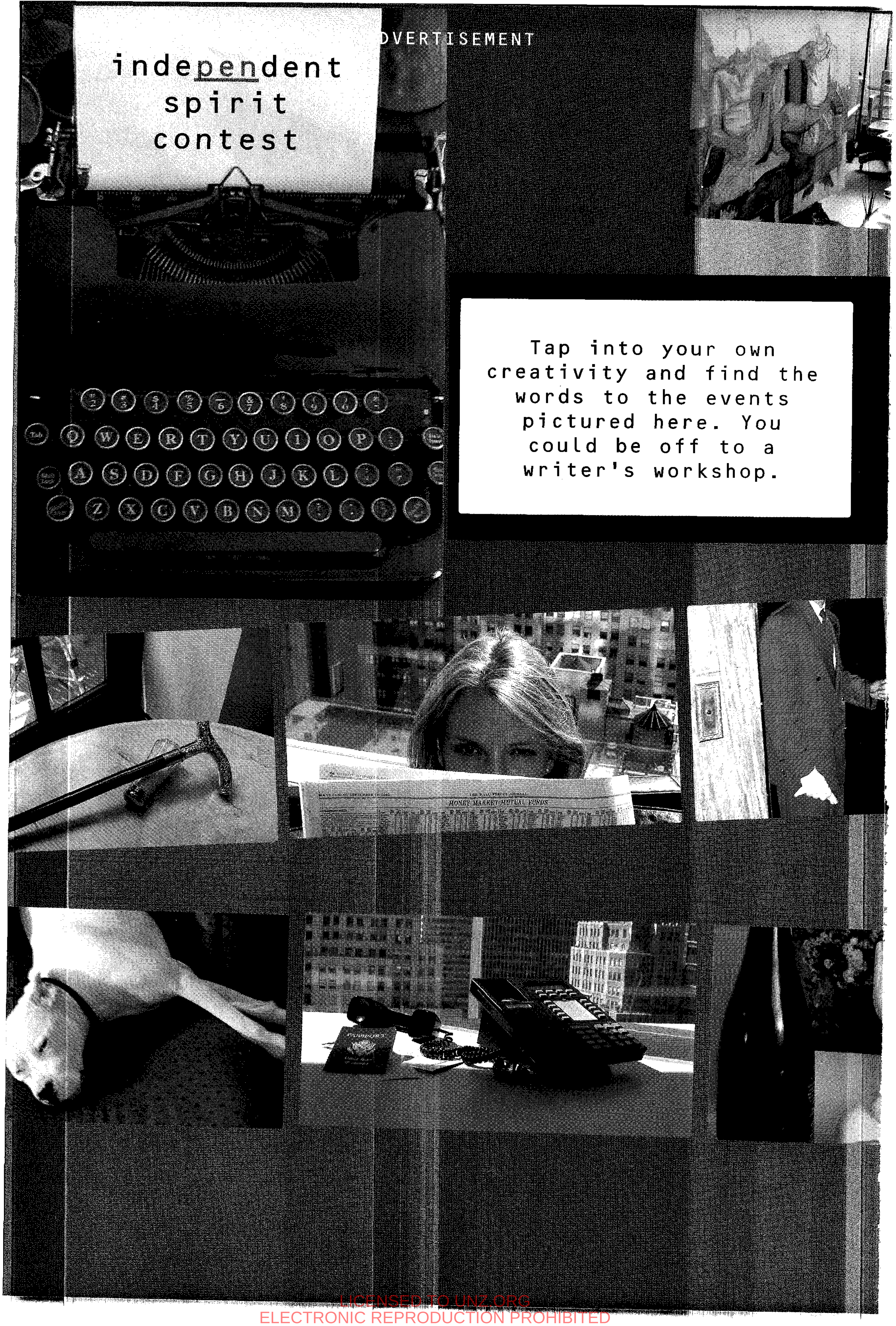

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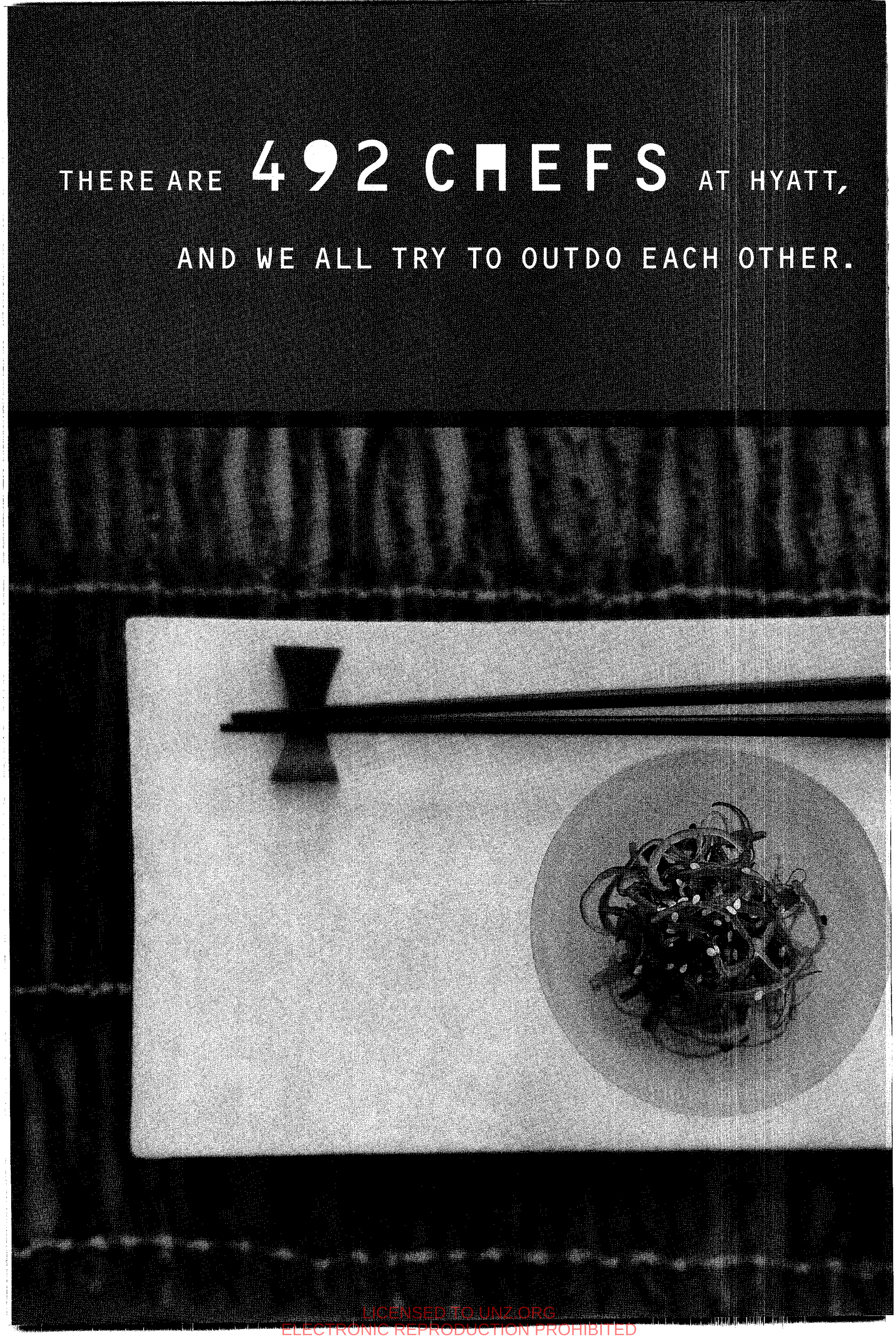
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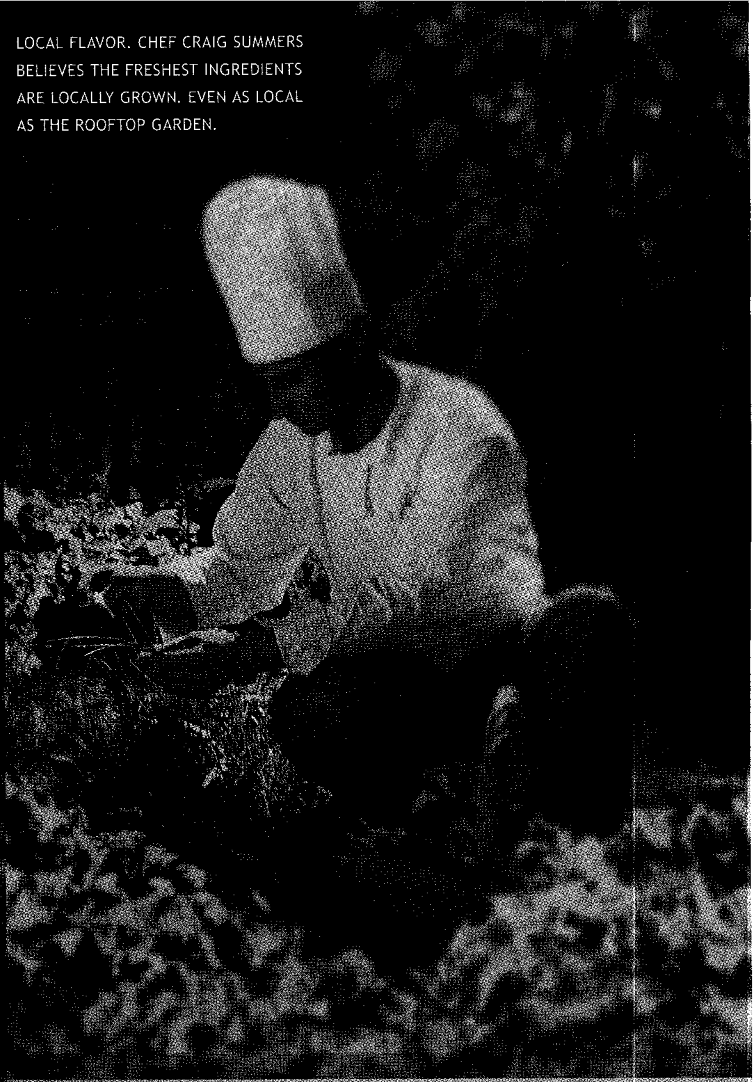

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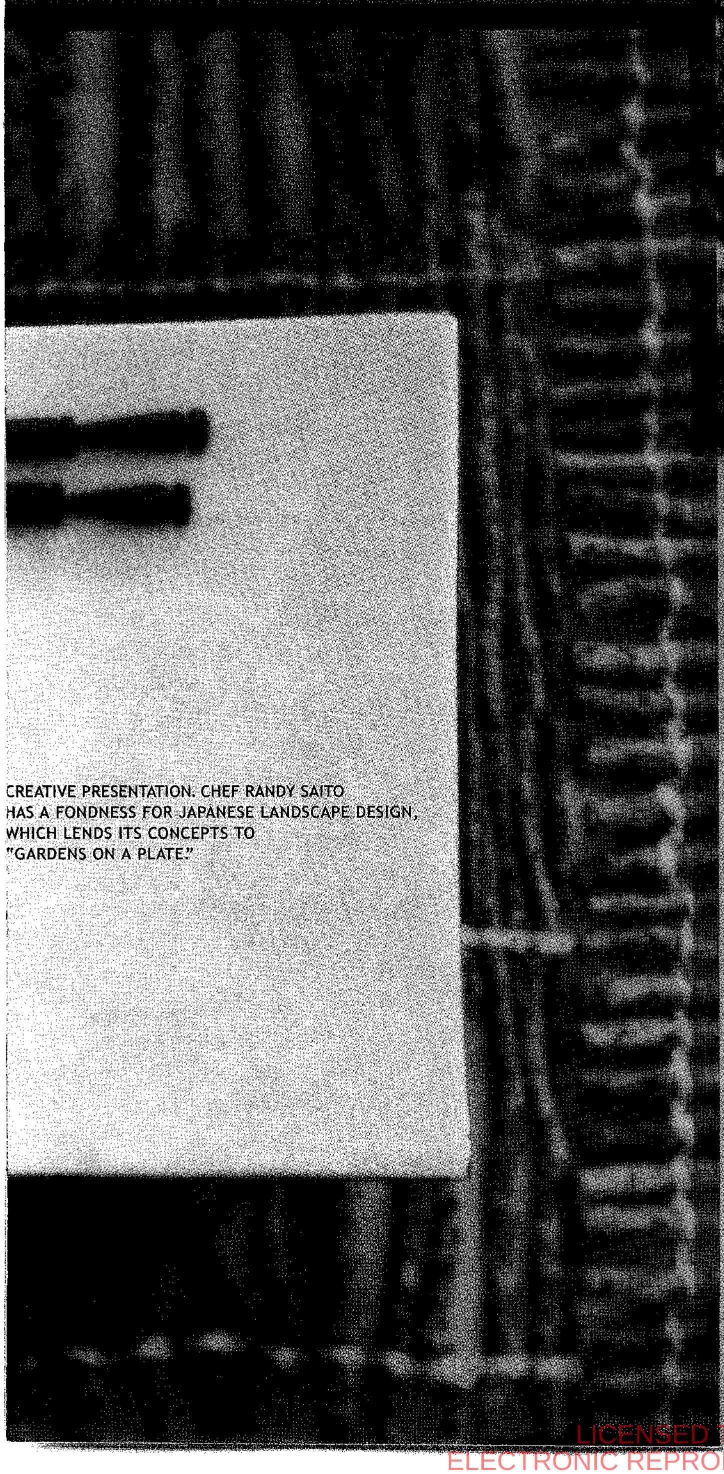

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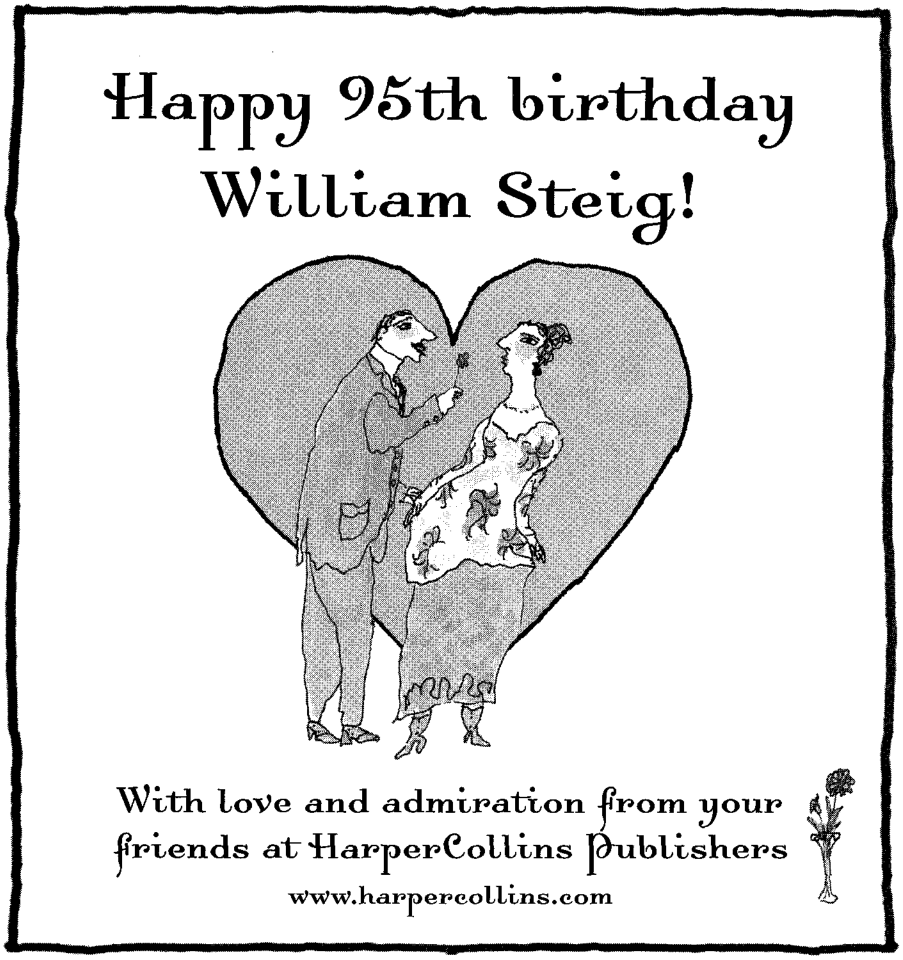
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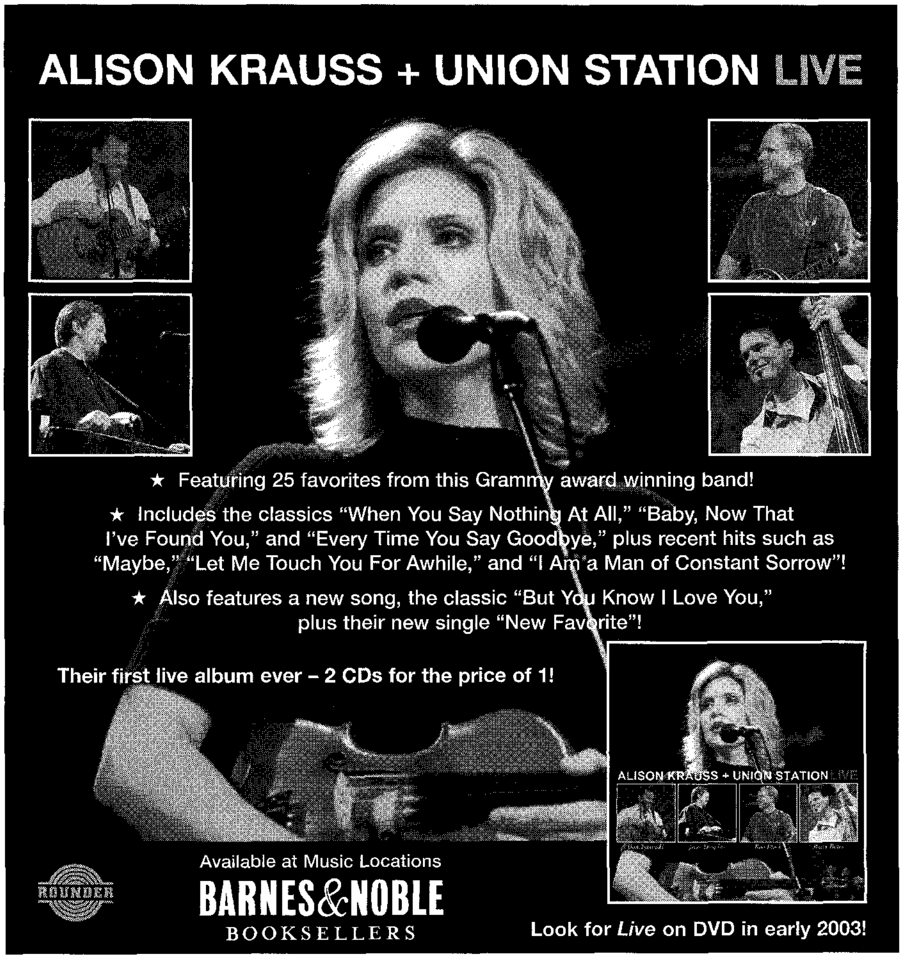
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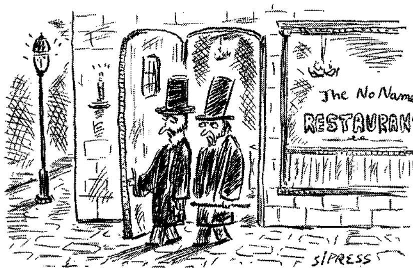
"What news from New York?" F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in an imaginary conversation in "My Lost City," a 1936 essay. " 'Stocks go up. A baby murdered a gangster.' 'Nothing more?' " The city, in all its confounding glory, is the subject of Kenneth T. Jackson and David S. Dunbar's anthology, **EMPIRE CITY** (Columbia), which begins with an account of Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage, includes Frederick Law Olmsted's original plan for Central Park, and recounts such forgotten chapters as the 1909 strike of twenty thousand female garment workers.



"Don't tell a soul. We don't want the steamboat-and-dinghy crowd finding it."

The influx of immigrants to the city changed everything. **THE HISTORIC SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS OF NEW YORK** (Little Bookroom), a guide by Ellen Williams and Steve Radlauer, looks at business brainstorms from a century ago. At the end of the nineteenth century, two hairdressers agreed to spruce up the tresses of porcelain beauties with push-broom lashes and rose paint smiles, and soon so much of their business consisted of these miniature makeovers that, in 1900, they renamed their establishment the Doll Hospital.

The city has always had a knack for improvisation. **IT HAPPENED ON WASHINGTON SQUARE** (Johns Hopkins), Emily Kies Folpe's social history of the Greenwich Village park—once a potter's field—explains that the square's Washington Arch was a temporary innovation that persisted: the original, conceived by the architect Stanford White as a parade decoration in 1889, was made of white-painted pine and papier-mâché and was popular enough to soon be replaced by a stone version.

—*Lauren Porcaro*

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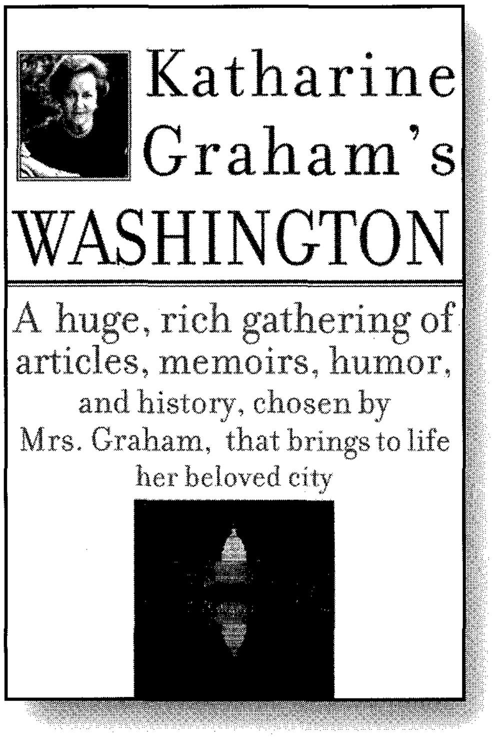

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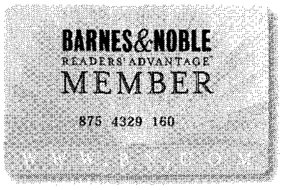

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MOVIES OPENING

8 MILE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 8.

ÉTOILES: DANCERS OF THE PARIS OPERA BALLET
A documentary about the dance company, including performances by Elisabeth Platel and Marie-Agnès Gillot. Nils Tavernier directed. In French. Opening Nov. 8. (Cinema Village.)

FAR FROM HEAVEN
Todd Haynes wrote and directed this drama inspired by the films of Douglas Sirk, about the life of a housewife (Julianne Moore) in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1957. Also with Dennis Quaid, Patricia Clarkson, and Dennis Haysbert. Opening Nov. 8.

FEMME FATALE
Brian De Palma's new thriller opens with a jewel heist at the Cannes Film Festival. With Rebecca Romijn-Stamos as a thief and Antonio Banderas as a tabloid photographer. Opening Nov. 6.

GOD IS GREAT, I'M NOT
A romantic comedy with Audrey Tautou ("Amélie"), in which she plays a Parisian model who becomes an overeager convert to Judaism after she falls in love with a Jewish veterinarian (Edouard Baer). In French. Opening Nov. 8. (Paris.)

HUSH!
A woman tries to persuade a gay man to be the father of her children in a comedy set in contemporary Japan. Directed by Hashiguchi Ryosuke. In Japanese. Opening Nov. 8. (Quad Cinema.)

JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE
Jonathan Stack and Jon Osman directed this documentary that investigates the deaths of two Puerto Rican men who were shot by N.Y.P.D. detectives in 1995. Opening Nov. 6. (Anthology Film Archives.)

THE RISING PLACE
A drama set in Mississippi in which a woman (Frances Fisher) discovers a cache of her aunt's letters that tell of a wartime baby conceived out of wedlock. Written and directed by Tom Rice. Opening Nov. 8.

STRANGE FRUIT
Joel Katz directed a documentary about the origins of the famous anti-lynching song. It's paired with "One Girl Against the Mafia," the story of an Italian teen-ager who was raised in a Mafia family and later testifies against its members. Opening Nov. 6. (Film Forum.)

FILM NOTES

AUTO FOCUS
Grim. In the late sixties, Bob Crane (Greg Kinnear), the real-life star of the TV series "Hogan's Heroes," links up with a video-technology salesman and hanger-on named John Carpenter (Willem Dafoe). In effect, the two men pimp for each other: Crane, the TV star with the devilish smile, attracts endless girls, some of whom sleep with Carpenter, and Carpenter, taping the proceedings, attracts a few girls with the cameras, too. The men, scoring night after night, engage in what you might call Old Sex—breast-fixated, impersonal, and brief. The director, Paul Schrader, doesn't try to turn us on; the movie is completely lacking in sensuality. Working from a script by Michael Gerbosi, Schrader jumps through vignettes of mirthless fun and bland debauchery. Despite their extraordinary intimacy, the men loathe each other—there's nothing holding them together but unfulfilled homoerotic feelings. Kinnear is good as the smug, shallow Crane, but Dafoe is so creepy that it's hard to imagine anyone speaking, much less sleeping, with him. Rita Wilson and the talented Maria Bello play Crane's wives.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/28/02.) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE
Michael Moore's rounded guzzler's belly hangs over his jeans, his shirt is untucked and probably untuckable, and his baseball cap covers a mass of unhealthy hair. He's an American satirist disguised as a loser. In his latest provocation—a documentary mixing stock footage, interviews, gun-dealer advertisements, and the like—he goes after America's gun culture, which he sees as the product of a collective guilt over slavery and the slaughter of Native Americans, a guilt that manifests itself in paranoia and a relentless obsession with security. Moore, as always, is less a reliable or coherent thinker than a left-wing joker with a camera, but some of his mocking sallies have a way of hitting their target.—*D.D.* (10/28/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE DAY OF THE JACKAL
Fred Zinnemann's 1973 adaptation of Frederick Forsyth's famous best-seller is a high-class movie that operates like a low-grade fever. The director sustains a queasiness for two and a quarter hours; only then does he provide a brisk and purgative catharsis. As the dapper English mercenary code-named the Jackal assembles the fake identities and the precision weaponry he needs to assassinate President Charles de Gaulle, life proceeds around him with eerie normality. The comedy is found in the contrast between the sleek, elegant Jackal (Edward Fox) and his nemesis—a pudgy, graying, eminently fatigable French detective (Michel Lonsdale)—but when Fox's human stiletto of a marksman commits a series of murders along his way, each one has a ghastly matter-of-factness. This is one sniper movie devoid of excess exploitation; the calm, observant director keeps us gripped with the spectacle of plodding, middle-aged investigators in Britain and France pooling their intelligence to track a very slippery gunman.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 7.)

DUEL IN THE SUN
Hilariously florid—sometimes referred to as "Lust in the Dust." This 1946 Wagnerian Western features Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones as lovers so passionate they kill each other. She's Pearl Chavez, a half-breed wench, and so by Hollywood convention, uncontrollably sexy, and Peck actually manages to bestir himself enough to play a hunk of egotistic hot stuff—maybe the name Lewt McCanles got to him, or maybe the producer, David O. Selznick, used electric prods. Peck clangs his spurs and leers, while Jones tosses her hair and heaves her chest; when they kiss, lightning blazes.—*Pauline Kael* (Moving Image; Nov. 9-10.)

8 WOMEN
François Ozon's new picture is a tonic of sorts, a hot-hued, postmodern murder-mystery musical hen party. The setting is virginal and unashamedly fake—a snowbound house interrupted by the arrival of a horde of famous French actresses. The wisest way to list them without giving offense is alphabetically: Fanny Ardant, Emmanuelle Béart, Danielle Darrieux, Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Huppert, Virginie Ledoyen, Firmine Richard, and Ludivine Sagnier. For sheer fetishistic whoopee, there is very little to rival the sight of Deneuve and Ardant getting into a catfight, all hisses and claws, and then sinking to the floor to stroke each other's whiskers. Ozon plainly worships the idea of the grande dame, and the movie allows him to both honor and deride his own devotion. There's lots of dancing, a striptease, and a surfeit of arch self-consciousness. Yet something of substance does creep through this concoction. In the competitive jostling of the women, we sense the eternal face-off of beauty against the beast of time. Nobody is more touching in this regard than Darrieux, her soft wrinkles unable to erode the exquisite heroines she once incarnated for Max Ophuls. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (9/16/02) (Kew Gardens Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

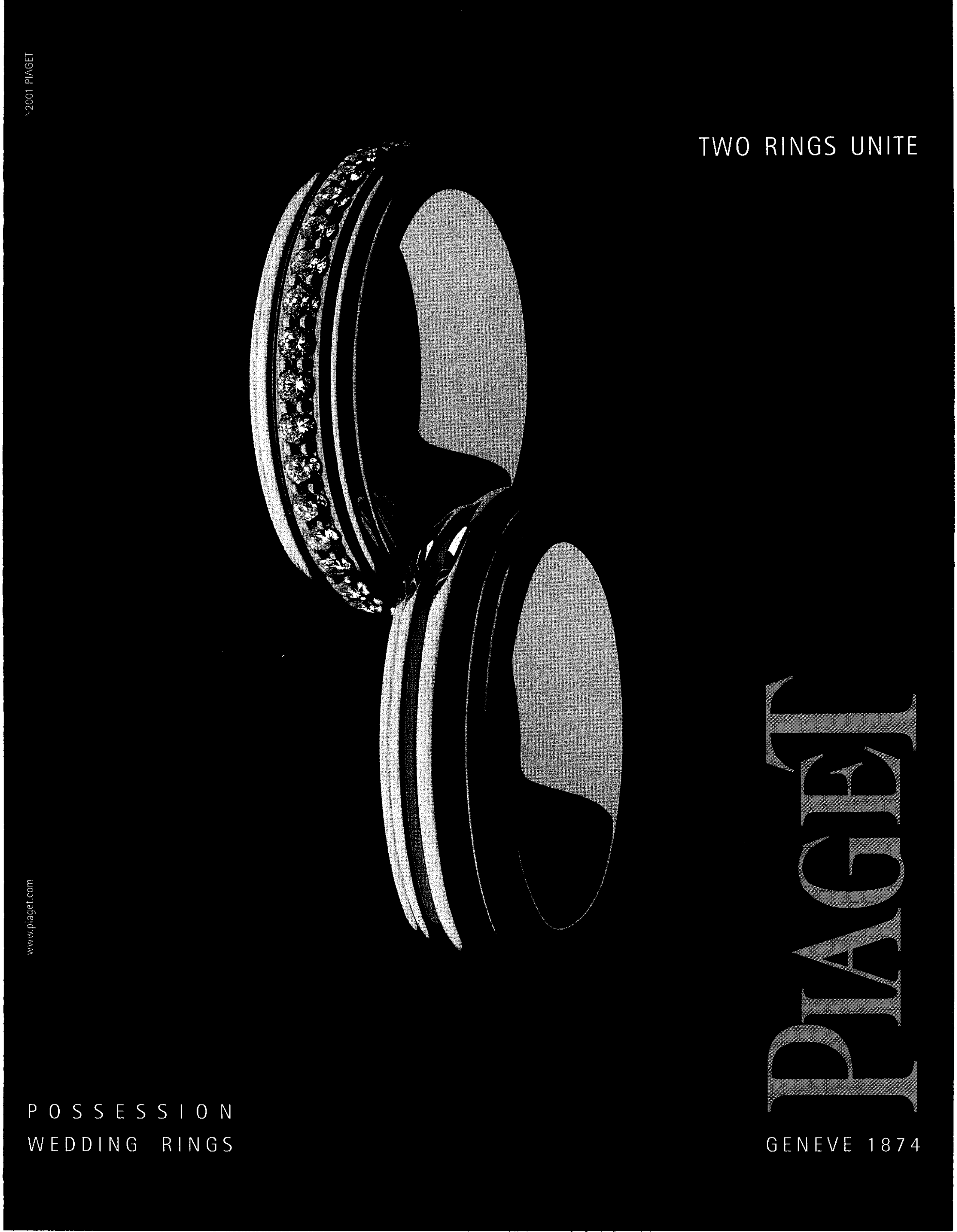
FRIDA
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

HEAVEN
The opening sequence, in which Cate Blanchett deposits a bomb in an office building, is a self-contained masterpiece of editing, and the rest of the movie works well—within its own preposterous logic. Tom Tykwer has a roving, fluid camera, and the buildings and streets of Turin seem depopulated and spare, suggesting that we've landed in the middle of a fable. (That's perhaps the best way to describe the script, written by the late Krzysztof Kieslowski, which tells of a place where true love gets communicated through a single hand clasp, and a prisoner and a sympathetic cop can flee police headquarters by hiding in the attic.) What keeps the movie grounded is Blanchett's expressive performance, and the fearful symmetry of her face, all the more stark when she shaves her head. Giovanni Ribisi plays the policeman who aids her escape, and together the two develop a murky chemistry out of the script's simple, sometimes cryptic dialogue. This is the first installment of what Kieslowski, who died in 1996, planned as a trilogy. The ending offers one of the great existential escapes, via helicopter—just don't ask too many questions.—*Michael Agger* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

JACKASS THE MOVIE
"Jackass," as you no doubt know—or, just as likely, don't even want to know—is trash culture's most extreme offspring, an MTV series that consists entirely of the host Johnny Knoxville and his merry band of skate punk-cum-frat boys performing masochistic stunts, the stupider the better. In the big-screen version of the show, which is little more than a series of unconnected scenes, Knoxville and company do things like walk a tightrope over an alligator pond while tempting the gators with raw chicken stuffed into their jockstraps. They also drive golf carts at reckless speeds over a miniature-golf course, eat a snow cone flavored with urine, and endure paper cuts between their toes and on their tongues. And in the tour de force, one lucky member of the troupe, Ryan Dunn, inserts a toy car into his rectum and then goes to the doctor for an X-ray, feigning puzzlement over his inability to sit down without discomfort. Merchant Ivory it's not—it's not even the Farrelly brothers—but there's no finer freak-show comedy around. And Conrad's principle of "fascination with the abomination" has never been so brilliantly, idiotically illustrated.—*Ben Greenman* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

MEAN STREETS
A true original, and a triumph of personal filmmaking. This 1973 picture about the experience of growing up in New York's Little Italy has an unsettling, episodic rhythm and it's dizzyingly sensual. The director, Martin Scorsese, shows us a thicker-textured rot than we have ever had in an American movie, and a riper sense of evil. With Harvey Keitel as Charlie, Robert De Niro as Johnny Boy, and Richard Romanus, David Proval, Harry Northup, George Memmoli, Amy Robinson, Cesare Danova, and in bits, David Carradine, Robert Carradine, and the director—he's the gunman in the car. (Most of the film was actually shot in Los Angeles.)—*P.K.* (Moving Image; Nov. 9-10.)

NAQOYQATSI
Depressing, but that may be the point. This is the third film in Godfrey Reggio's *qatsi* series, a trilogy designed to remove the oblivious shine from modern life. Like the others, it's a series of short clips and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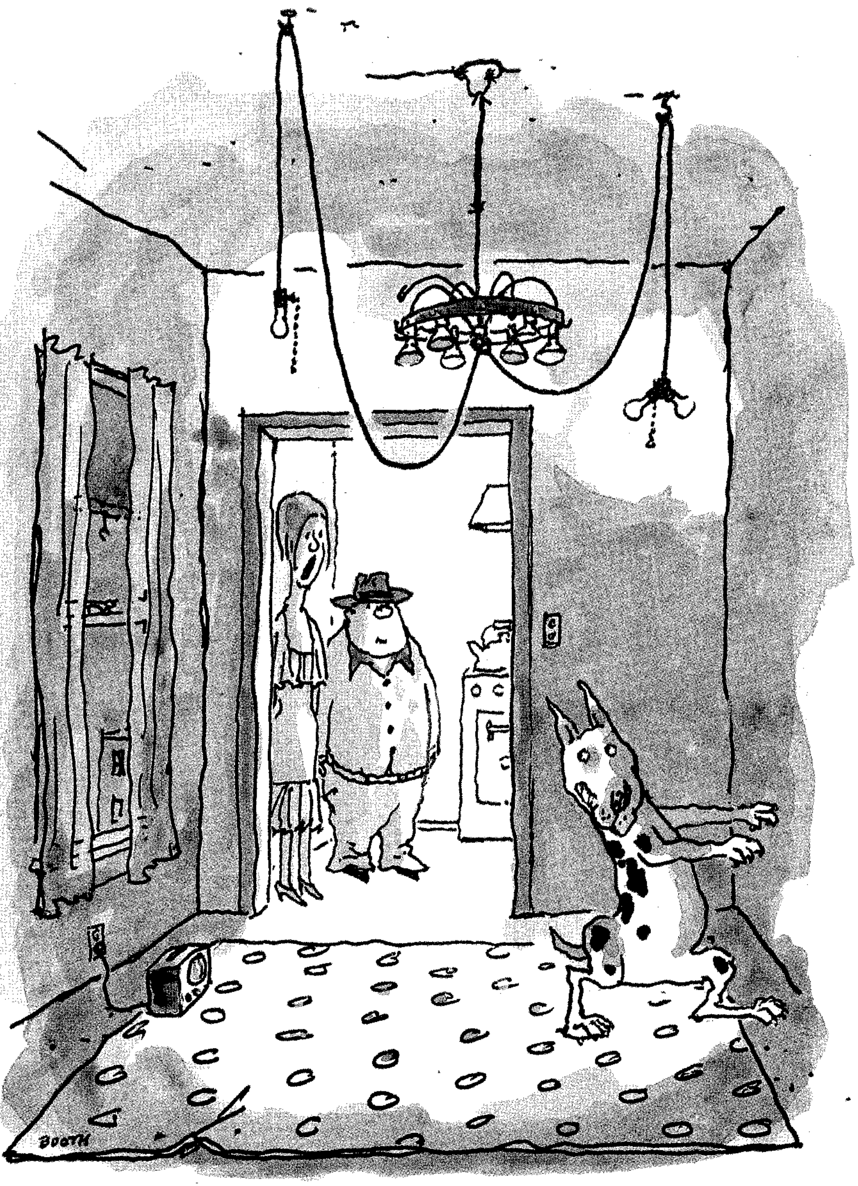
images set to a score by Philip Glass. There's no narration—Reggio believes that "the language of the moment is the image," and the title translates from the Hopi as "a life of killing each other." The subject is not so much war as what might be called the hippie matrix—a world view that sees man as dominated by corporations, industry, and technology. Reggio has a particular talent for collecting footage from the visual fringe, such as industrial videos and MRI scans, and then distorting them in ways that makes them beautiful and ominous. The movie works best at its less didactic moments; it's not the A-bomb cloud that will haunt your dreams but the crash-test dummies in a bucking airplane, moving in slow motion with near-human grace.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center.)

PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE
Paul Thomas Anderson's whimsical romantic comedy is a bit like an amusement-park ride that builds tremendous forward momentum and then suddenly juts to the side. Even those of us who enjoy perversity in movies may be put off by its skittering, against-the-beat rhythms. Adam Sandler plays Barry Egan, a frightened fellow in a bright-blue suit, a nerd who sells merchandise out of a San Fernando Valley warehouse and stammers his way through the simplest encounters. At dawn, a harmonium is dropped from a truck outside the warehouse; a bit later, a lovely woman (Emily Watson) inexplicably falls in love with Barry as the music track offers drumbeats in arbitrary counterpoint to the imagery—in fact, everything that happens is arbitrary, and the characters are mysterious without becoming interesting. At times, Barry explodes with rage, slamming his fists into the walls. Anderson wants to say something quirky and powerful about love and the miraculousness of ordinary lives, but his world neither intersects with ours at any point nor hangs together as an independent magical creation. There are touches out of Harold Lloyd's and Jacques Tati's comedies and old Hollywood musicals, but just touches.—*D.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

RED DRAGON
A fourth helping of Hannibal Lecter, the third featuring Anthony Hopkins, and, with any luck, the last for a while. When a character becomes a franchise, there is only so much repetition that he—or she—can take before sliding into parody, and there is something distasteful in the thought that we are being urged to treat a homicidal maniac as a lovable rogue. The film presents a more youthful Lecter (although Hopkins cannot camouflage his years) who arrives in jail after spearing a detective called Will Graham (Edward Norton). From his cell, Lecter helps Graham to track the savage Tooth Fairy, whose real name is Dolarhyde (Ralph Fiennes), and whose identity Graham is strangely slow to unveil. In comparison with "The Silence of the Lambs," the new movie lacks mystery and dread, but the screenwriter, Ted Tally—who also scripted "Lambs" but wisely passed on "Hannibal"—lends it shape and thrust. Directed by Brett Ratner, somewhat anonymously. With Emily Watson as a startling and sexy blind woman, and Philip Seymour Hoffman as a journalist whom you can chew.—*A.L.* (10/14 & 21/02) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE RING
Gore Verbinski's film, a retelling of the hit 1998 Japanese thriller, is a cold, arty exercise in scary moviemaking. Naomi Watts, in a strong performance, stars as a newspaper reporter who discovers a videotape that promises death to the viewer a week after it's seen. The movie's nifty beginning—all anxiety and dread—suggests that the audience is in for a fearful ride, but the one-dimensional story quickly runs out of fuel. Verbinski desaturates the film's colors (muddy browns and jaundiced yellows) in a vague attempt at atmosphere. Although he manages to pull off a few spectacular fright moments, the tension never really kicks in.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)



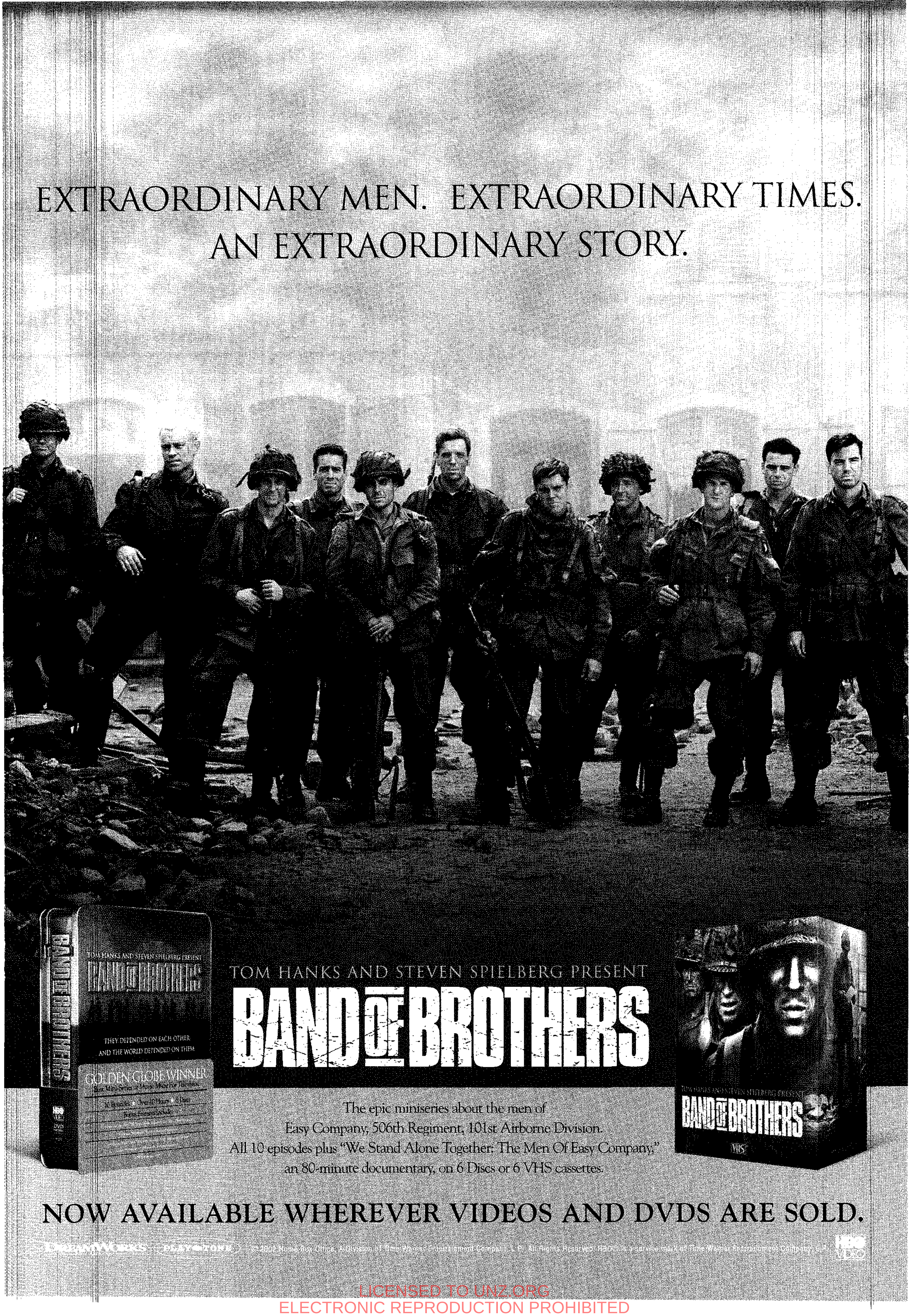
"The fever just never broke." (*At the Pioneer, a twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration of "Saturday Night Fever."*)

ROGER DODGER
A smart and sulfurous début from the writer and director Dylan Kidd. Campbell Scott stars as Roger, whose career is in advertising but whose raison d'être is the untiring pursuit of sex. (Almost no love is made in the film, yet the craving for it fills every frame.) Having been jilted by his lover (Isabella Rossellini), who also happens to be his boss, Roger goes hunting by night, in the company of his callow nephew (Jesse Eisenberg) from Ohio. The twist is simple enough: the older man has much to teach but even more to learn. Being Roger, however, he refuses to improve, and it's the bullish, unsentimental drive of the movie that insures its comic kick. The supporting cast, including Jennifer Beals and Elizabeth Berkley, plays nicely off the central monster, but this is Scott's movie all the way. He is rarely off camera, but he does not abuse that privilege; there is restraint, and far more wit than you'd expect, in his dazzling depiction of a rampage.—*A.L.* (11/4/02) (Lincoln Square and Sunshine Cinema.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
John Travolta plays Tony, a nineteen-year-old Italian Catholic who works selling paint in a hardware store in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge; on Saturday nights, he's off to the local disco dream palace, where he's the champion dancer. It's Tony's pent-up physicality—his needing to dance, his becoming himself only when he dances—that draws us into the pop rapture of this 1977 film. The mood, the beat, and the trance rhythm are so purely entertaining, and Travolta is such an original presence, that a viewer spins past the crudeness in the script (by Norman Wexler, based on Nik Cohn's June 7, 1976, *New York* cover story, "Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night"). Karen Lynn Gorney plays opposite Travolta as Stephanie, who is trying to climb out of Brooklyn and into Manhattan, which is seen as the magic isle of opportunity—not ironically but with the old Gershwin spirit. Young moviegoers saw themselves expressed in this film, and Travolta became a national cult hero, almost overnight.—*P.K.* (Pioneer Theatre; Nov. 6-11.)

SECRETARY
A comic porno-fantasy shot by the director Steven Shainberg in a slow, dreamy, neo-De Palma style with a candy-colored palette. Maggie Gyllenhaal is a masochistic girl who finds happiness working for a creepy lawyer (James Spader) who regularly whacks her on the fanny. Gyllenhaal has a Kewpie-doll silliness that almost makes the naughty parts of the movie fun, but Shainberg takes forever to get the story going and lacks the stylistic panache to pull off his pain-is-liberation premise. The movie is a piece of brazen anti-feminism that says, "If pain is your thing, you go, girl!"—*D.D.*

GEORGE BOOTH



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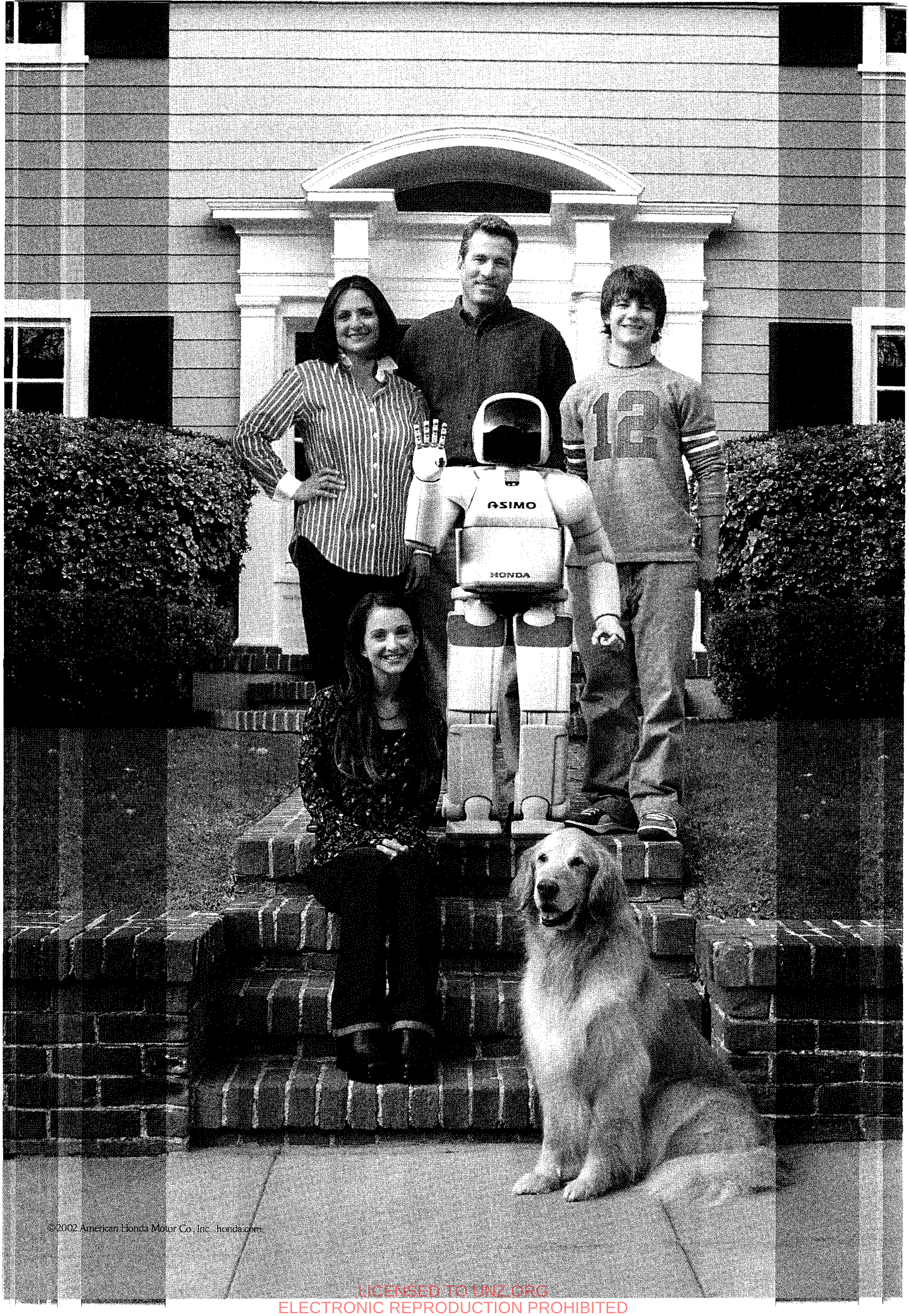
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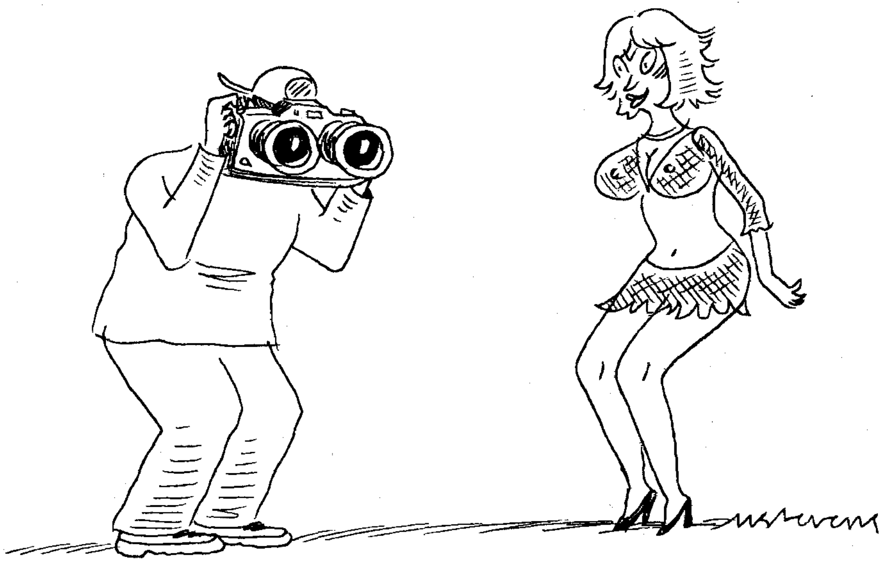
(9/23/02) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square.)

SPIRITED AWAY
In his native Japan, the animator-director Hayao Miyazaki is considered a national treasure, and this movie, which he came out of retirement to complete, recently surpassed "Titanic" as that country's highest-grossing picture. It's an amazing work, displaying a visual intelligence that's meticulously composed and obscenely clever. Miyazaki's playful aesthetic is like a Japanese word that can't be adequately translated, best approximated as part Spielberg, part Dr. Seuss. "Mature" American audiences may be put off at first by a film that is essentially a cartoon about a fearful ten-year-old girl. But as the hero, Chihiro, sees her parents turned into swine and flees into an alternate world filled with the creatures of Japanese mythology and of Miyazaki's own invention, any distracting sense of childishness falls away. Left to savor are virtuoso touches, like a flock of birds that become useless paper, a train that glides along the surface of a lake, and one of the great villains of all time, Yubaba, who looks like a bobble-headed grandmother on speed.—*M.A.* (Eastside Playhouse, 42nd Street E Walk, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE
Why remake "Charade"? Stanley Donen's movie is known and loved for its pairing of Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn. Jonathan Demme has kept tightly to the story, although you could argue that it was only the stars who made the story worth considering in the first place. We are still in Paris, but this time we get Mark Wahlberg and Thandie Newton; she plays the young widow, and he is the mysterious friend, or agent, who apparently comes to her aid. Newton has no problems with the stylish panic of the role, but Wahlberg seems ominously out of his depth; however many berets you clap on his head, he still looks like a man who would be rather be on the planet of the apes. Fortunately, the surrounding landscape has its pleasures; Demme's manner is looser and funkier than Donen's, and the Paris we see is a jamboree of teeming streets and suspicious citizens, hopped up on a soundtrack of world music. The film is hilariously indifferent to the conundrum of the plot—the solution may even be found on the poster, for those who care—but it is sustained, just about, by the buoyancy of its mood. With Tim Robbins as a villain on a Ferris wheel (shades of Harry Lime), and the alluring Christine Boisson as a cop.—*A.L.* (11/4/02) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



Opening November 8, Antonio Banderas and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos in Brian De Palma's "Femme Fatale."

UNFINISHED SYMPHONY
This documentary portrait of the May 1971 march from Concord to Bunker Hill by Vietnam veterans is at once a lucid analysis of an incisive political stroke and a sweeping threnody for the lives blasted and lost in America and Vietnam. The protest was organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the participants traced Paul Revere's route backward. Using archival film and rare footage of the march, the filmmakers Bestor Cram and Mike Majoros show how jarring it was for civilians to see these men throwing away their war medals or putting on guerrilla-theatre scenes of soldiers rousting "villagers" in Concord. When the vets are threatened with expulsion from their camp on Lexington Green, they find unlikely allies in townspeople who argue for permission for them to stay there overnight. Cram and Majoros don't just score their film to Henryk Górecki's Third Symphony: they organize their material to fit its three movements. Never has Górecki's composition more fully lived up to its subtitle, "The Symphony of Sorrowful Songs."—*M.S.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 12.)

WHITE OLEANDER
Does anyone know what happened to the Michelle Pfeiffer who made "The Fabulous Baker Boys" and "Married to the Mob"? She seems to have disappeared, taking with her a sly sense of fun, leaving the new-model Pfeiffer to concentrate on earnest empowerment studies like "Dangerous Minds," and now this. Peter Kosminsky's film, adapted from the novel by Janet Fitch, stars Pfeiffer as a Los Angeles artist who kills a man and goes to prison, a place she enjoys for its clarity of purpose, and from where she urges her teen-age daughter Astrid (Alison Lohman) to be herself at all costs. In practice, this involves making life hell for any foster parent who has the guts, or the kindness, to take Astrid on. The film is luminous to look at and hard to listen to, as great chunks of whole-meal fiction are read out in voice-over. There are contributions from Robin Wright Penn and Renée Zellweger, but the movie belongs to Lohman, who must be praying that it will lead to roles in which she will be allowed to smile.—*A.L.* (10/14 & 21/02) (Battery Park 16, Cinema 2, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALL OR NOTHING
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

BLOODY SUNDAY (10/7/02)
Kew Gardens Cinema and Union Square.

THE GREY ZONE
72nd Street East and Village East Cinemas.

I SPY
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

SAFE CONDUCT
Cinema Village.

THE TRIALS OF HENRY KISSINGER (10/7/02)
Film Forum.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

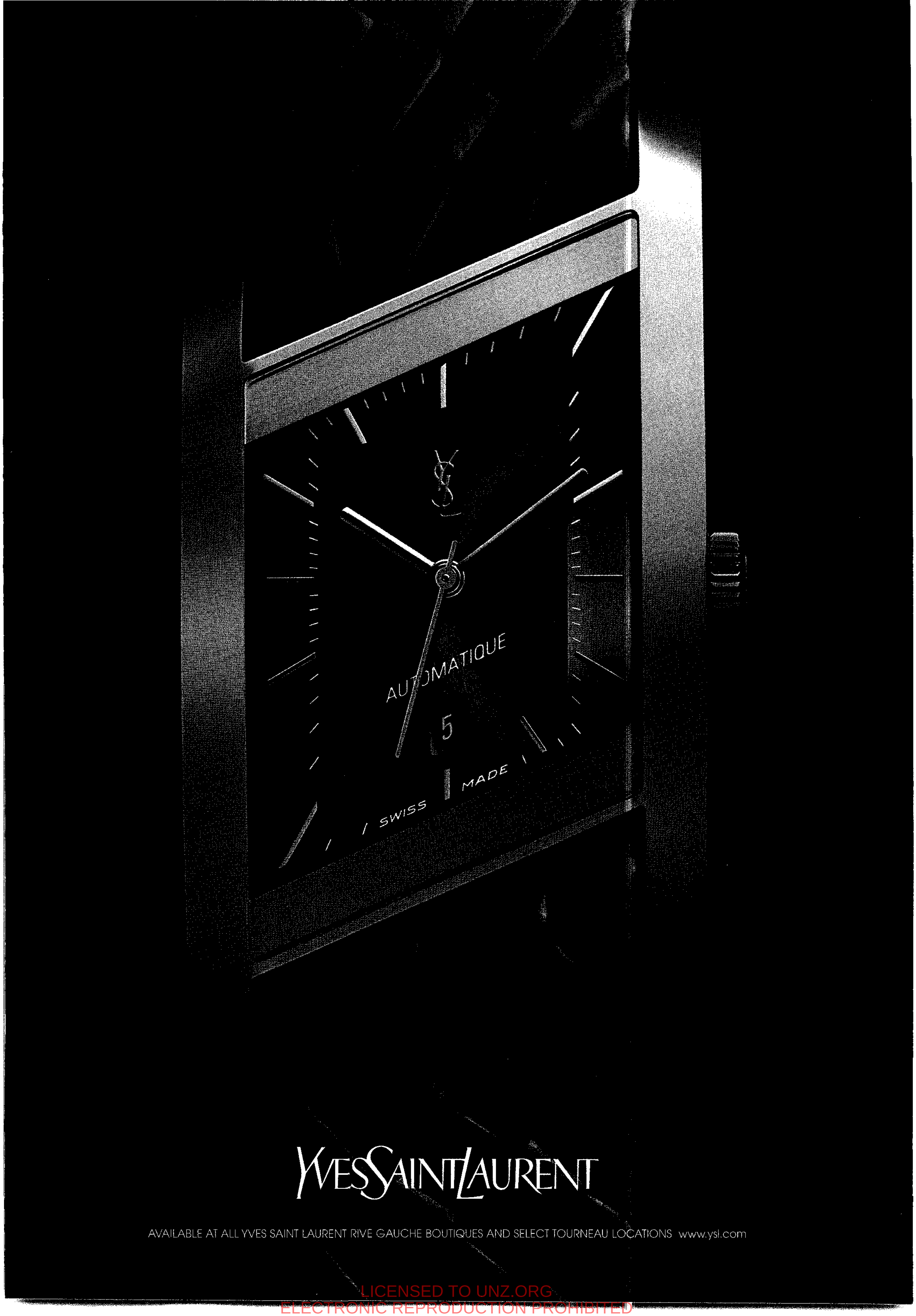
Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Dec. 29: "Directed by Martin Scorsese." Nov. 9 at 2 and Nov. 10 at 4:30: "Mean Streets" (†) and "Italianamerican" (1974). ♦ Nov. 9 at 5: The critic Janet Maslin interviews Scorsese. ♦ Nov. 10 at 2: "Who's That Knocking at My Door?" (1968). ♦ Repertory nights. Nov. 9-10 at 6:30: "Duel in the Sun" (†).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Nov. 8-14: "The Eternal Evil of Hong Kong," a selection of horror films.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through Nov. 30: "From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War on Film." Nov. 7 at 4:30, 6:50,

MICK STEVENS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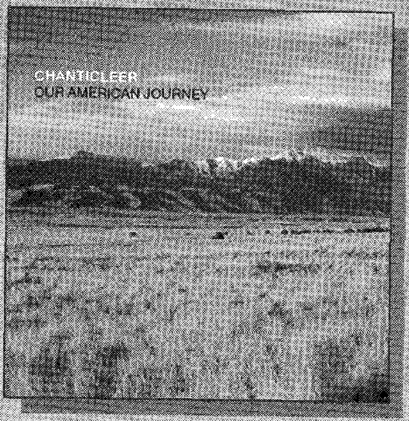

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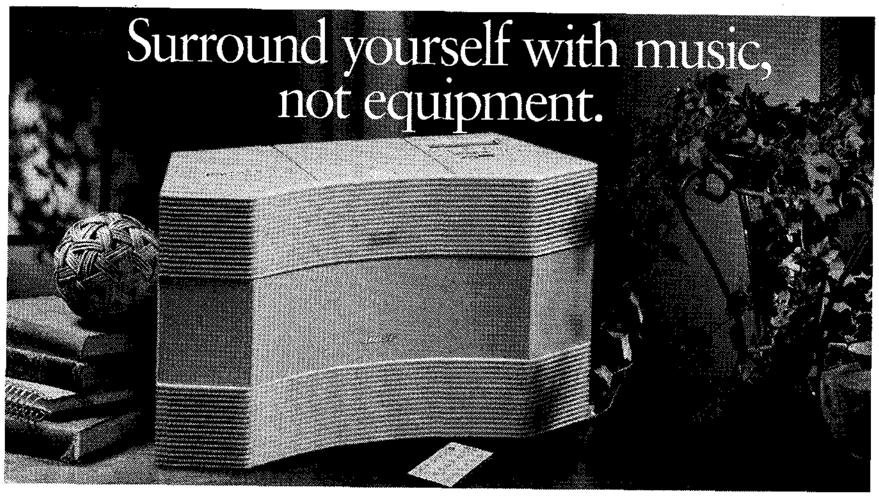

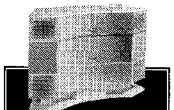

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and 9:30: "The Liberal War" (1972, Nick MacDonald). ♦ Nov. 8 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Coming Home" (1978, Hal Ashby). ♦ Nov. 9 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Gardens of Stone" (1987, Francis Ford Coppola). ♦ Nov. 10 at 2, 4:30, and 7 and Nov. 11 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Full Metal Jacket" (1987, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Nov. 12 at 6:50: "Unfinished Symphony" (†). ♦ Nov. 12 at 9:10: "When the Tenth Month Comes" (1984, Dang Nhat Minh; in Vietnamese).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Nov. 6-7 at 1:10, 3:15, 5:30, 7:40, and 9:50: "Quai des Orfèvres" (1947, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French). ♦ Nov. 8-12 at 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, and 9:20: "The Phantom of Liberty" (1974, Luis Buñuel; in French).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through Dec. 17: Neo-noir films. Nov. 12 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Inspector Lavardin" (1987, Claude Chabrol; in French).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
127 E. 23rd St. (777-4900)—The museum has opened a temporary home for its Film and Media programs in the restored Gramercy Theatre. Through Nov. 7: "To Save and Project," a celebration of film preservation. Nov. 7 at 4: "Meyer of Berlin" (1919, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ Through Nov. 21: "Variations on an Enigma," a tribute to the actress Delphine Seyrig. Nov. 7 at 2: "Accident" (1967, Joseph Losey). ♦ Nov. 7 at 8:30: "The Day of the Jackal" (†). ♦ Nov. 8 at 2: "Stolen Kisses" (1968, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Nov. 8 at 4: "On the Move" (1979, Márta Mészáros; in German). ♦ Through Nov. 17: New films from Germany. Nov. 8 at 6:30 and Nov. 9 at noon: "The Manns—A Story of the Century" (2001, Heinrich Broeler). ♦ Nov. 9 at 6:15: "Nowhere in Africa" (2001, Caroline Link). ♦ Nov. 9 at 9: "Absolut Warhola" (2001, Stanislaw Mucha). ♦ Nov. 10 at 1: "The Days Between" (2001, Maria Speth). ♦ Nov. 10 at 3:30: "I'll Wait on You Hand and Foot" (2000, Dilthey). ♦ Nov. 10 at 5: "Grill Point" (2002, Andreas Dresen). ♦ Nov. 10 at 7:15 and Nov. 11 at 2: "A Map of the Heart" (2002, Dominik Graf). ♦ Nov. 11 at 4:15: "Getting My Brother Laid" (2001, Sven Taddicken). ♦ Nov. 11 at 6: "Berlin Symphony" (2002, Thomas Schadt).

PIONEER THEATRE
155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300)—Nov. 6-11: Twenty-fifth-anniversary screenings of "Saturday Night Fever" (†).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (358-0573)—Midnight movies. Nov. 8-9: "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam).

THALIA THEATRE
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400)—Recent cinema from Brazil, presented as double features. All films are in Portuguese. Nov. 9 at 3 and Nov. 10 at 7: "Nelson Gonçalves" (2001, Elizeu Ewald) and "A Certain Mr. Caymmi" (1999, Aluisio Didier). ♦ Nov. 9 at 7 and Nov. 10 at 3: "The Trespasser" (2001, Beto Brant) and "Belly Up" (1997, Brant).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 7: "The New Faces of Swedish Cinema." Nov. 6 at 1: A program of Swedish short films. ♦ Nov. 6 at 3:15: "Invisible" (2002, Joel Bergvall and Simon Sandquist). ♦ Nov. 6 at 6: "Jalla! Jalla!" (2000, Josef Fares). ♦ Nov. 6 at 8:15: "The Reunion" (2002, Mans Herngren and Hannes Holm). ♦ Nov. 7 at 1: "The New Country" (2000, Geir Hansteen Jörgensen). ♦ Through Nov. 27: "Transcendent Realism: New and Old Cinema from Belgium." Nov. 7 at 7 and Nov. 8 at 3:30: "Hop" (2002, Dominique Standaert). ♦ Nov. 8 at 1: "From the Branches Drops the Withered Blossom" (1960, Paul Meyer). ♦ Nov. 8 at 6:15: "Wild Blue, Notes for Several Voices" (2000, Thierry Knauff). ♦ Nov. 8 at 9: "Strass" (2001, Vincent Lannoo). ♦ Nov. 9 at 1:30: "Olivetti 82" (2001, Rudi Vandenbossche). ♦ Nov. 9 at 3:45: "The Publishers" (2000, Robbe de Hert). ♦ Nov. 9 at 6:30: "Meisje" (2002, Dorothée van den Berghe). ♦ Nov. 9 at 9:15: "Les Enfants de l'Amour" (2001, Geoffrey Enthoven). ♦ Nov. 10 at 1:30: "Toto the Hero" (1991, Jaco van Dormael). ♦ Nov. 10 at 3:45: "Clouds: Letters to My Son" (2001, Marion Hänsel). ♦ Nov. 10 at 6: "Iran Veiled Appearances" (2002, Thierry Michel). ♦ Nov. 10 at 8:30: "From the Other Side" (2002, Chantal Akerman).

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SETTLING INN

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AWAKENINGS

BY SUSAN BRESLOW SARDONE

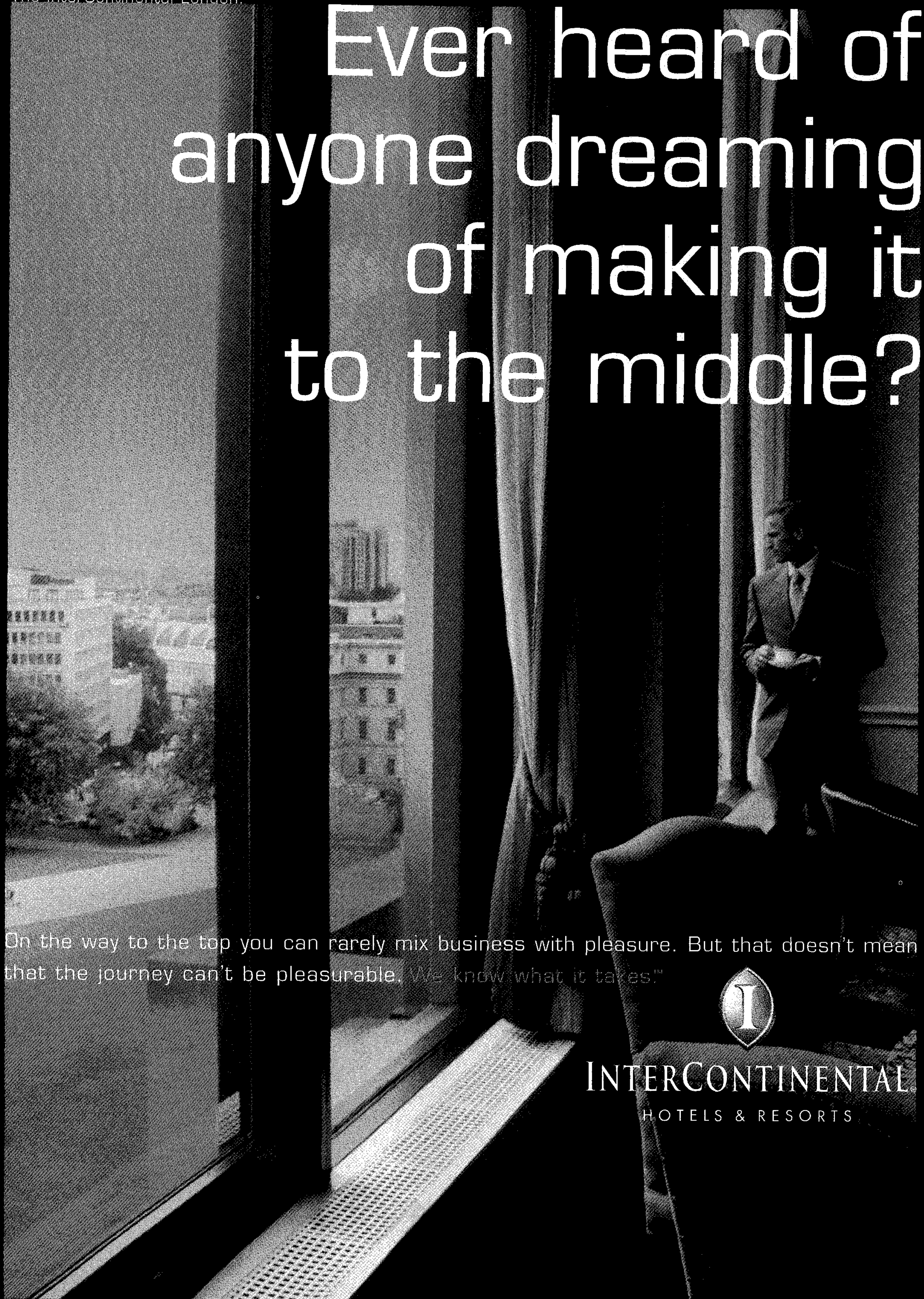
Ought a hotel be unabashedly seductive? When a world-class city's dazzling museums, smart shops, and timeless monuments beckon, is it sinful to want to snuggle deeper under the lofty duvet, channel surf, and order a gourmet treat from your luxe hotel's room service before getting down to business?

At InterContinental Hotels' hundred and forty worldwide properties, the temptation to settle in is strong. The company is investing nearly a billion dollars to refurbish key properties and purchase new ones. And after surveying guests to identify their greatest needs away from home, InterContinental has further upped the ante by providing a bevy of new services.

Several of these kept me comfortable and connected on a recent tour. At InterContinental hotels in Rome, Madrid, and Hong Kong, I was able to start each day with a printed E-copy of *The New York Times* (or any of 150 other newspapers) and follow news from the States. When it was time to tend to business, a fax machine and printer were delivered to my room free of charge. And thanks to WorldLink technology, images I captured and uploaded to my laptop made their way to clients before I did.

A landmark on the Kowloon waterfront, **InterContinental Hong Kong** was my first stop—and I arrived in style, chauffeured from Hong Kong International Airport in a charcoal-gray metallic Mercedes-Benz S-320 from the hotel's fleet. Standing on stilts above Victoria Harbor, the hotel is the first and only built totally over water. Formerly The Regent Hong Kong, the property was acquired for $346 million last year, and its spacious accommodations are ideal for private meetings—or simply unwinding. And with HBO available, I had the reassurance of knowing Tony Soprano wouldn't whack anyone without my watching.

Thanks to membership in the Six Continents Club, I was able to take advantage of InterContinental's instant check-in. After a swipe of my credit card and signature, I was on my way. The majority of guest rooms face the harbor, and the skyline view outside mine was mesmerizing: Central Plaza, the Hong Kong



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Exhibition Centre (which resembles the Sydney Opera House), and the Bank of China on Hong Kong Island all stood tall against the shimmering water.

The arrival of personal butler Edward Cheng—bearing succulent lychees, guavas, and pears as well as refreshing Chinese Dragon Well Tea with its orchid-like aroma—pleasantly interrupted my reverie. He also prescribed the jet lag recovery kit, filled with aromatherapy goodies, to help adjust to the time-zone change. A believer in the curative powers of water, I visited the outdoor infinity spa pools overlooking the harbor, and detoxified in a Chinese herbal wrap at the hotel spa.

With visions of fine cashmere, pearls, and bespoke suits dancing in my head, I called the concierge and arranged for a personal shopper the next day to lead me to the best buys in Hong Kong. But first, I had a date with a duvet. . . .

Suitcases significantly heavier, I arrived a few days later at the **InterContinental De La Ville Rome** atop the Spanish Steps. The hotel, which began life as a nunnery, has maintained its sixteenth-century cloister façade and neoclassical lobby. Inside Suite 721, under frescoes of flocculating clouds, I perused the hotel's "Little Things That Make a Difference" booklet, depressed the instant-service button on the phone, and availed myself of the so-called instant refresher—a complimentary fifteen-minute head-and-neck massage. *Bellissimo.*

The panoramic view from my terrace took in the rooftops of Rome, the Pantheon, and the Basilica of St. Peter. I headed out to visit the recently renovated Borghese Gallery, where Titian's masterpiece, "Sacred and Profane Love," remains intact after nearly five hundred years, still a vision of "fleeting happiness on earth." Later, InterContinental's concierge not only secured a coveted dinner reservation for me at the new celebrity hang, Il Bolognese, but also arranged a Rome-by-night tour that included the Colosseum bathed in moonlight.

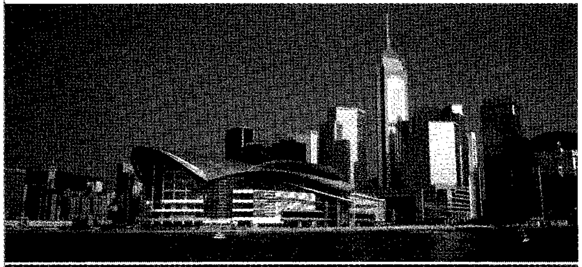
Having completed a twenty-million-dollar renovation in September, the **InterContinental Castellana Madrid** design team got it right by preserving this original hotel's marble accents and the dramatic fountain that depicts two female nudes holding vessels that pour into the waterfall. The landscaped gardens and the lobby, with its imposing dome, are a welcome oasis within the lively capital. As a late arrival, I was especially grateful for the hotel's "instant money," twenty-five dollars in local currency I could conveniently charge to my room.

Tucked under the dome at Bar 49, I sipped a zesty red 1998 Marques de Caceres, nibbled on *pulpo a la Galiega* (tortilla tapas with Spanish ham and octopus) and scanned the space for Antonio Banderas look-alikes. Finding none, I hied to my room and quickly collected E-mail (thank you, ISDN line), stashed the laptop in the safe, skimmed the in-room insider's city guide, and plotted the next day's itinerary: I would commune with El Greco, Goya, and Velásquez in the Prado, just one of the splendid museums along nearby Paseo del Arte. From there, I planned a stroll on the Golden Mile, Madrid's fashionable shopping district, where buttery Loewe leather goods would inevitably tantalize.

I toured the Royal Palace (some fifty of its 2,800 ornate rooms) and imagined myself and the Mr. ensconced on the gold-and-scarlet *fauteuils* in the aptly named Throne Room. Afterwards I took my inner child for a gravity-defying roller-coaster ride at the new Warner Bros. Movieworld theme park. It wasn't likely that I would be needing the Castellana Madrid's soundproof windows to help me sleep like a *niña* that last night in the city.

The final stop on my trip, **InterContinental The Barclay New York**, which opened in 1926, has undergone a multimillion-dollar, seventy-fifth-anniversary face-lift. Originally built as an apartment-hotel for the railroading Vanderbilts and their fellow travellers, the property still has the feel of a private residence. Guest rooms have inlaid parquet floors, foyer areas, beamed ceilings, and opulent window treatments. The palette of my room—pale yellow, sky blue, and forest green—was as fresh as New York in spring, and the king-size bed with its silken comforters and velvet-trimmed shams, a voluptuary's dream. Manhattan, with its round-the-clock seductions, kept me from them—but only briefly.

(Susan Breslow Sardone is a New-York based freelance writer.)



ROOMS WITH A VIEW
The Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

courtesy of Hong Kong Toursim Board

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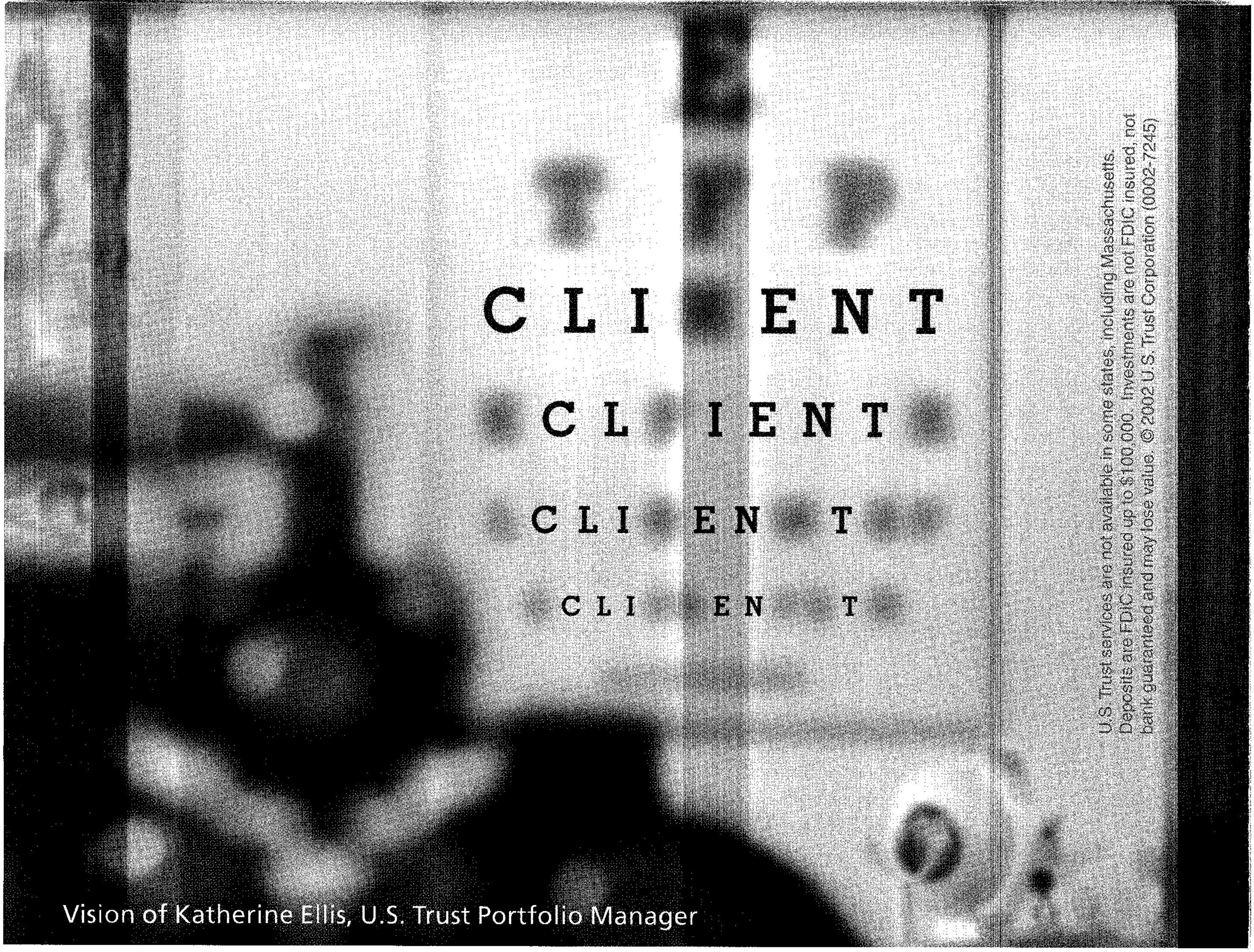

Vision of Katherine Ellis, U.S. Trust Portfolio Manager

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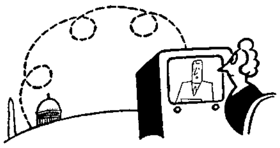
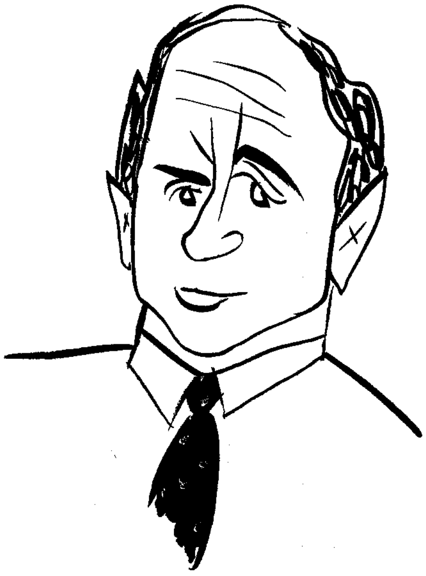


The memorial service for Senator Paul Wellstone, held last Tuesday evening in the Williams Arena, on the University of Minnesota campus, was overlong, excessively partisan, unpretentious, emotional (without being maudlin), and, above all, egalitarian—in sum, an accurate reflection of the man being memorialized. The hall was filled with political dignitaries, the sort of people who usually deliver the eulogies on such occasions, but only one politician, Senator Tom Harkin, of Iowa, was invited to speak. Much of the evening was devoted to remembrances of others who had died in the plane crash with Wellstone—his wife, Sheila, and his daughter, Marcia, and three campaign staff members—which were delivered by personal friends. There was none of the glitz and few of the easy tears that have come to mark such public events. The frankly political nature of the service was much debated afterward. But the most striking aspect of the evening was the crowd: an estimated twenty thousand people, who had come to pay their respects, and who responded aerobically to the oratory; every round of applause, and there were dozens upon dozens, seemed a standing ovation.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Such crowds—indeed, crowds of any sort—have almost disappeared from American public life. Most political events, particularly in this election year, consist of a candidate, a microphone, and a few television cameras. Often, there will be more people standing behind the candidate—police officers, students, veterans, anyone who might seem evocative or picturesque—than in front. One can travel about for days, watching politicians at work, without setting eye on a voter who has appeared voluntarily, out of curiosity, or merely out of a sense of citizenship. Politics has become a boutique trade; at times, it seems more private than public—democracy without people.

A common explanation for the withering of public life is the absence of "conviction" politicians, the current term of art for those who, like Paul Wellstone, have ideological beliefs, and there is some truth to that: bolder ideas make for bigger crowds. The examples of Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan are often cited. But some of the most compelling American politicians come from the middle of the spectrum—Theodore Roosevelt, John Kennedy, and, most recently, John McCain—all of whom campaigned on strong, but ideologically indefinable, beliefs. The common thread is a robust sense of American destiny, a willingness to set ambitious goals and to sound important themes in a grand rhetorical style, and, notably, an intense desire to engage the idealism of young people. The absence of such appeals in recent elections has been striking, and it is no accident.

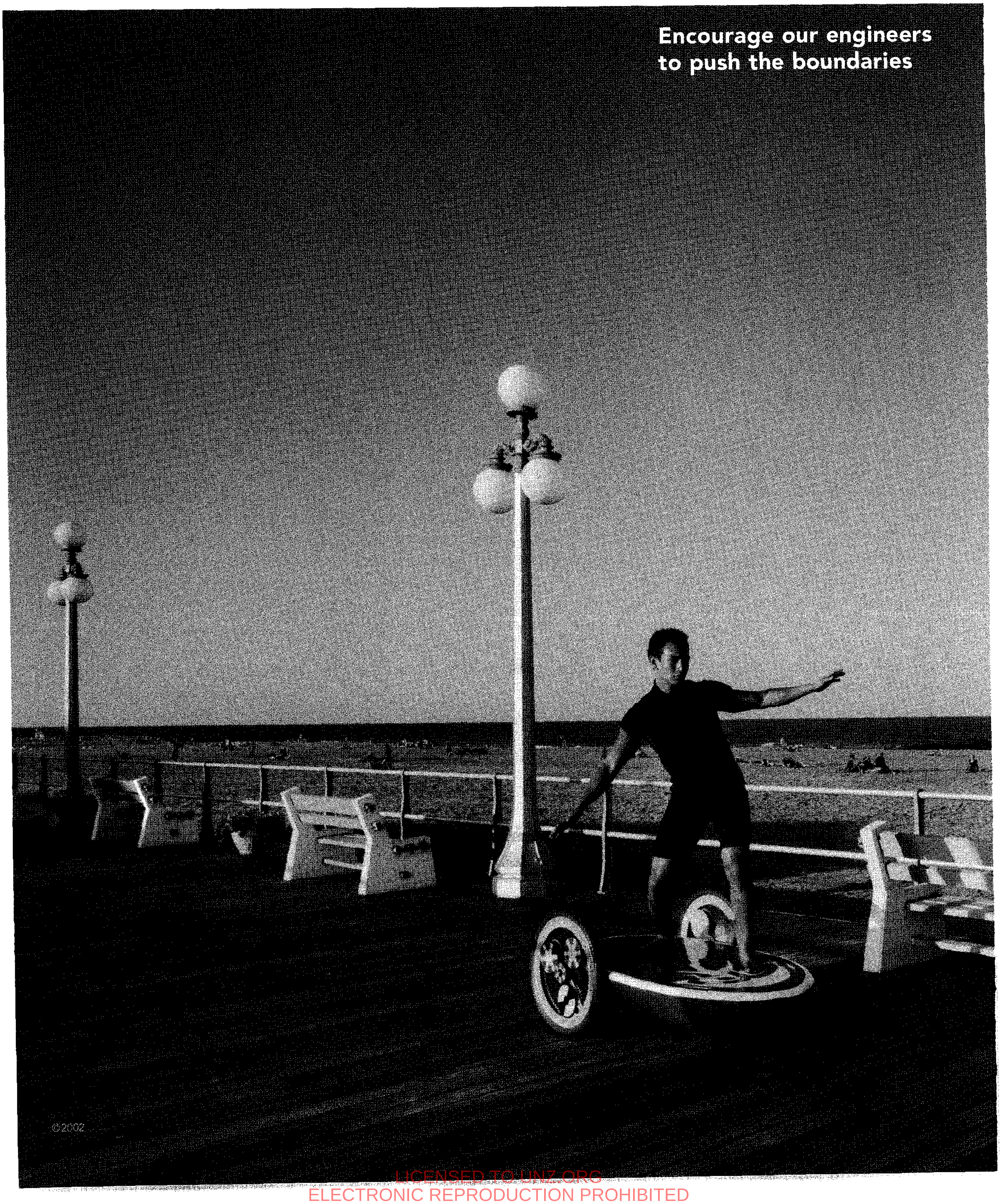


Paul Wellstone

"We have tactical elections," the pollster Stanley Greenberg told the Washington *Post* last week. "We don't have big elections, because there is every prospect that you can win by thinking small." The formula is well known: mobilize your most avid supporters—the party "base"—without offending your financial backers, and then aim an appeal at the independent demographic slivers most likely to be voting. Passion is deemed too risky, and so are "larger" themes, like war and peace; environmental depredation; energy independence; the corruption, crudeness, and commercialization of many of our major institutions. It is better to keep turnout low, manageable, predictable.

And so the Democrats have tried to run a national campaign this year based upon three tiny, and mostly bogus, themes:

TODAY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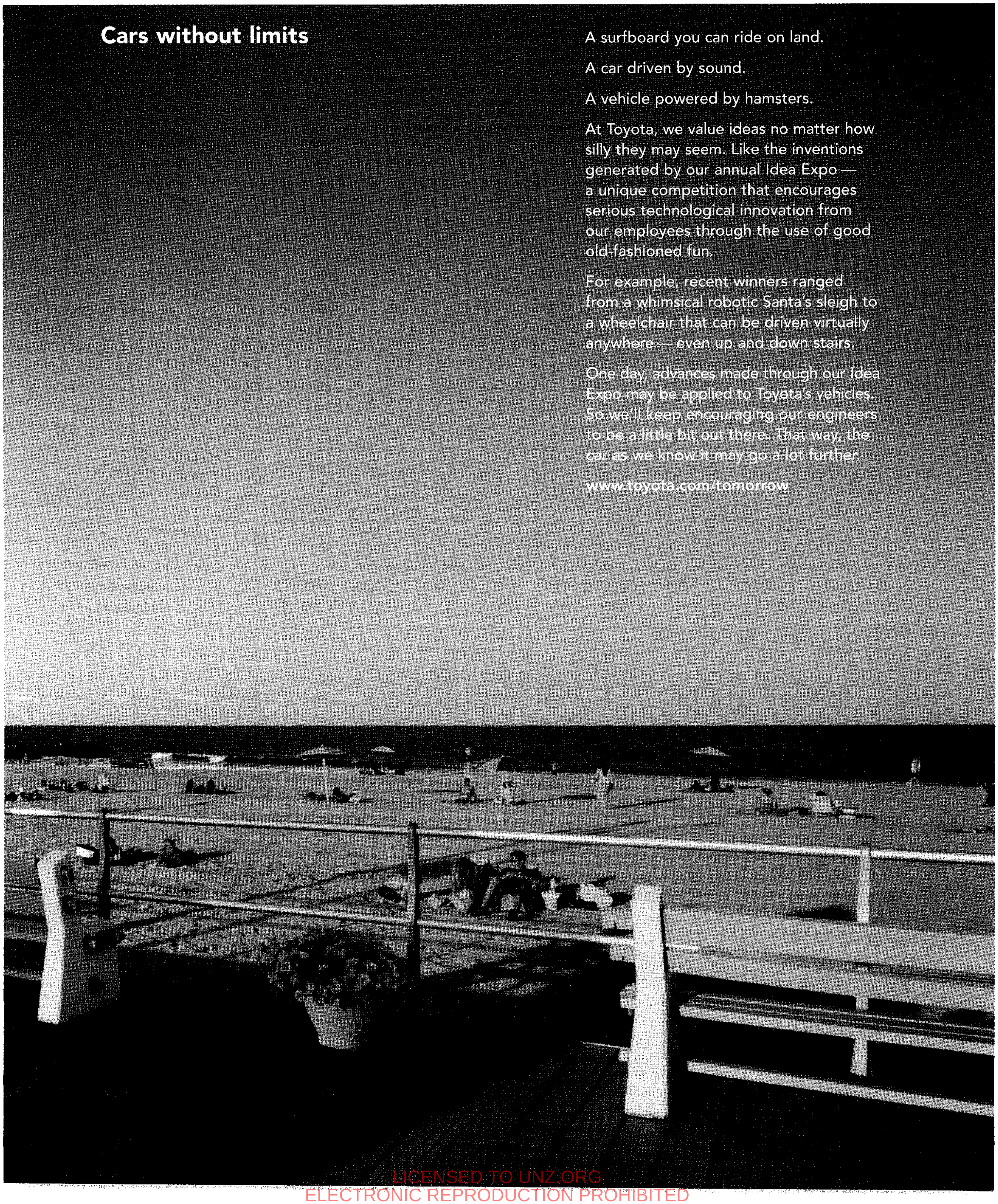
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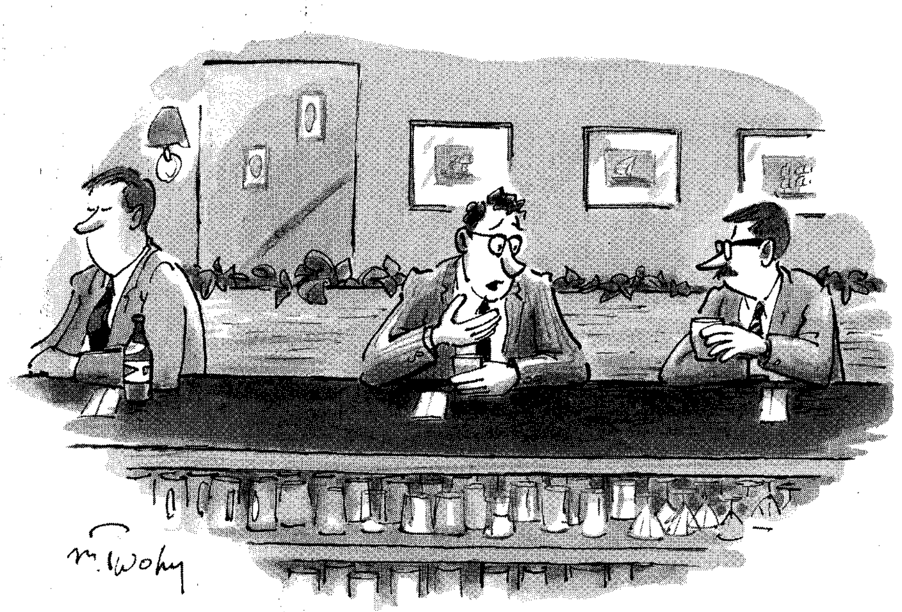


"Of course, once you're a scapegoat you long to be dead wood again."

scaring senior citizens about the imminent privatization of Social Security; pandering to senior citizens by proposing an expensive and ill-considered prescription-drug plan; and blaming George W. Bush—in vague terms, without offering an alternative—for the economic downturn. Two of the three, you may have noticed, are targeted at elderly voters. (And they wonder why young people aren't interested in politics!) The Republicans, for their part, have worked overtime trying to smudge their differences with Democrats on Social Security and prescription drugs, and dug out several reliable chestnuts of their own—the eternal plea for lower taxes and the implication that anyone who doesn't totally support the President overseas is unpatriotic.

There was a time, after the Cold War and before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when such inanity was, perhaps, more tolerable. But the nation now faces monumental issues, in its conduct overseas and in its need for disciplined governance at home. That the Democrats have chosen not to discuss the radical, unilateral torque in Bush's foreign policy—to say nothing of Iraq—is outrageous. (That they have delayed the homeland-security bill, and the important funding it provides to local police and fire departments, in order to please their labor-union base is not very pretty, either.) That George W. Bush has refused to revise his excessive tax cut, even though the money to pay for it has disappeared, is equally outrageous. That few politicians have chosen to defy the empty strategies laid down by their parties and their political consultants is most outrageous of all. Paul Wellstone was the only senator in a close bid for reëlection to vote against giving the President the power to use force against Iraq; his poll numbers rose after he did so. The emotions unleashed by his death—the tributes from even his staunchest political opponents—are certainly a consequence of Wellstone's, and his family's, bracing, unvarnished humanity; but, one senses, there is also a more general mourning for the politics of larger themes and for politicians willing to discuss them. It is, in any case, stunning that the death of one man has occasioned the only breath of life we've seen in this election year.

—*Joe Klein*

HOME REMEDY DEPT.
A CASE OF THE BLUES

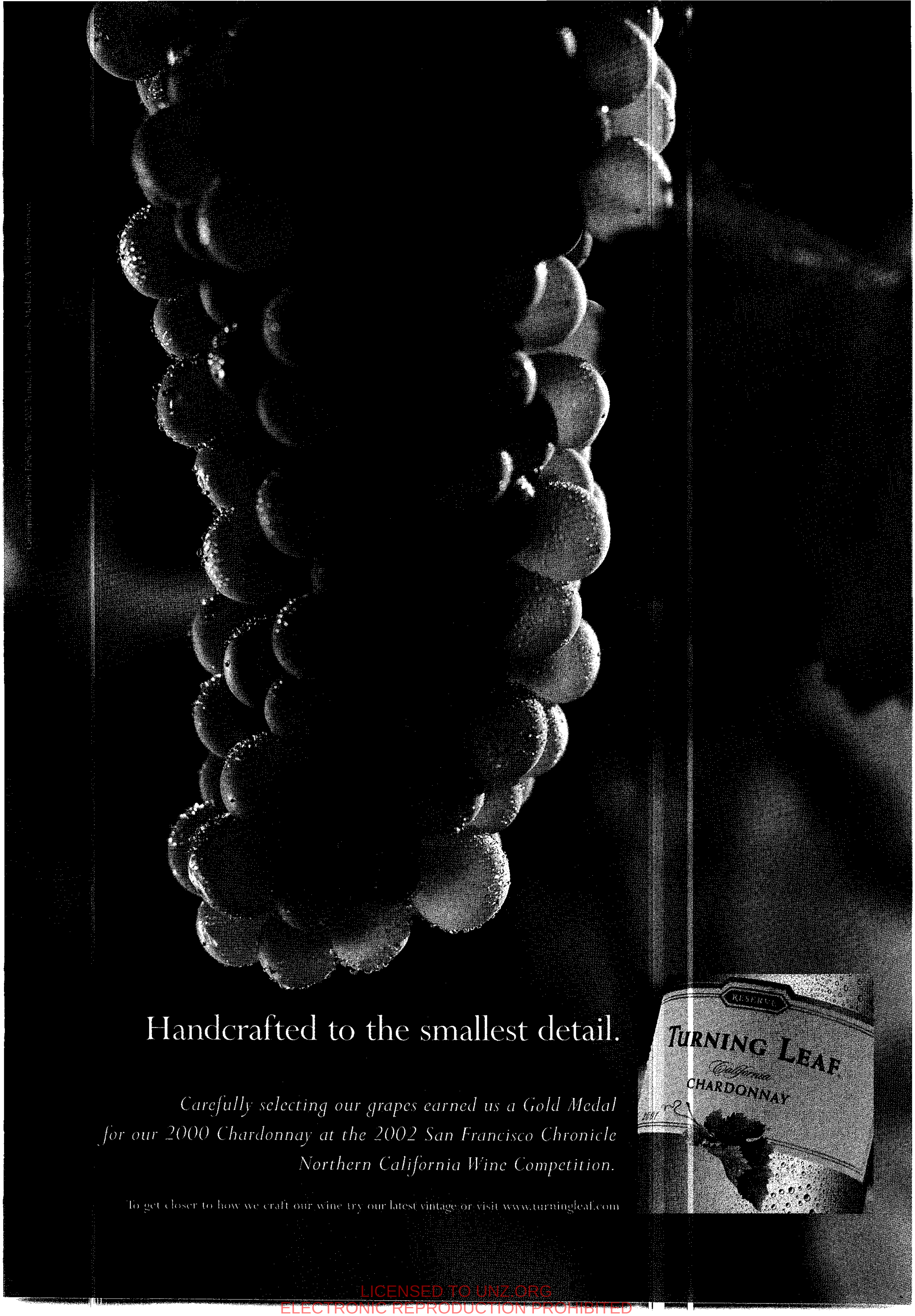
The last time silver was a big issue in an American election was probably in 1896, when William Jennings Bryan was running on a pro-silver-based-currency platform and giving his famous "Cross of Gold" speech. Now silver is back, in Montana politics, though it is not so much in the campaign as in one of the campaigners.

Specifically, silver is in the Libertarian candidate for the United States Senate, Stan Jones, and silver is in him to such an extent that he has turned blue, or blue-gray, depending on how you look at him. His condition is known as argyria, and he developed it three years ago after drinking a homemade colloidal-silver concoction, in preparation for Y2K-related antibiotics shortages. Naturally, pundits have made the most of this, likening him to the Smurfs and the Blue Man Group, among others. Jones has complained that such comparisons are distracting voters from his platform, which includes a call to dismantle the F.B.I., the C.I.A., the A.T.F., the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Departments of Energy and Education. But there is one person, at least, who, though not happy about the fact that Jones contracted argyria, is pleased that he has mentioned his condition in public—Rosemary Jacobs.

"I'm thrilled!" Jacobs said the other day, from her home, in Vermont. "People who don't believe me will hear him."

A retired Montessori-school teacher, Jacobs, who is sixty, developed argyria as a child on Long Island, after her doctor prescribed nose drops with silver in them. She did not recognize that she had changed color until she was fourteen and a nun asked her, "Why are you that color?" Subsequently, Jacobs learned that silver builds up in human tissue and that, as far as anyone knows, its toxic side effects cannot be reversed. The discoloration—her skin is a bluish-gray—is concentrated mostly on her face and upper body. A doctor once attempted to sand the color off her skin, to no avail. "I don't know what I look like anymore," she said. "I can only know what I look like by the reactions of strangers, and I do know that I frighten people." She sometimes shouts back at those who shout rude remarks at her, and outstares people who stare. "Many people with argyria become reclusive. I'm sorry, but I'm not going to do that. If you don't like how I look, it's your problem."

Jacobs has maintained a Web site cautioning people about the dangers of silver, since she noticed, a few years ago, that health-food stores were selling silver and extolling its benefits, which are some-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times said to include the cure of acne, cancer, leprosy, plague, ebola, and anthrax. "I thought I was going to start reading about the problems of people like me," she said. But instead she read stories written by colloidal-silver promoters (alternative-medicine practitioners, survivalists, and so on). She likes to point out that silver did not prevent her from getting breast cancer—and that when she went into surgery for her cancer the nurses, seeing her skin pigment, thought that she was undergoing cardiac arrest. When argyria sufferers lie down in public, they are often confused with the dead.

Silver was used during the Middle Ages to treat various nervous disorders and in the early twentieth century to treat syphilis. As recently as the nineteen-fifties, colloidal silver was an ingredient in many cold remedies. Three years ago, the Food and Drug Administration ordered companies that sell products containing colloidal silver to stop making claims about its health benefits, but promoters still sell silver via the Web as a dietary supplement.

As a lone anti-silver spokesperson, Jacobs takes a regular beating from the silver boosters. "The nicest ones say that I'm just confused," she said. "The other ones say I'm funded by the government, the medical industry, and the drug cartel."

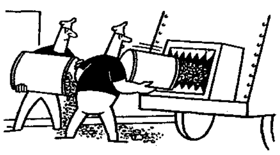
Stan Jones was busy campaigning last week and could not be reached, but Tom Kotynski, the associate editor of the Great Falls *Tribune*, was happy to discuss how he broke the Jones argyria story in his column, which happens to be called "Talk of the Town." In late September, Kotynski was at a debate among the Senate candidates in Great Falls and immediately noticed something amiss. "I've still got the news nose," Kotynski said. Next to the pink-skinned complexion of the Green candidate, for instance, the Libertarian candidate stood out. "I said to myself, 'Holy Cow! That guy looks like he's gonna die!' So I made a mental note to go up and ask what's wrong with him." After the debate, Jones told Kotynski that he'd been drinking silver. "He has a great sense of humor," Kotynski said. "He said, 'You're making this too serious.' And that's when he said he was practicing for Halloween."

The *Tribune* is working on a follow-up story on the use of colloidal silver in Montana, where it is also manufactured. Silver promoters are already accusing the paper of doctoring its picture of Jones to make him look bluer than he is. Meanwhile, Rosemary Jacobs is trying to get in touch with him—she sent him a letter two weeks ago, with her phone number. "I believe that the man has been quacked," she said, "and I don't think he knows it."

—*Robert Sullivan*

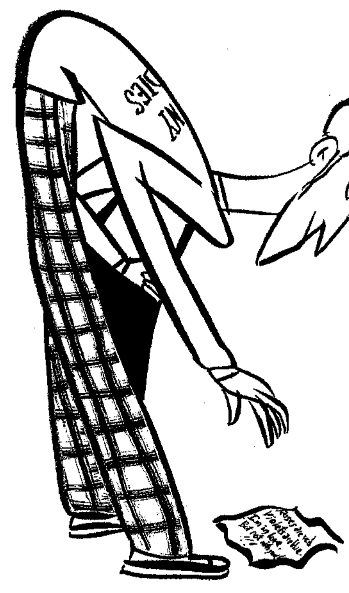
INK

FINDERS KEEPER



The world is full of lost love letters if you know where to look. Davy Rothbart, the publisher of the magazine *Found*, knows where to look: the floors of city buses, the recycling bins behind Kinko's, the backstops of windblown ball fields. Rothbart and a growing army of fellow-scavengers are constantly finding doodles, diaries, report cards, and appeals to conscience ("If you took my detergent I'm sure it was a mistake so I'm not mad *yet*"). Then Rothbart publishes these finds in *Found*, adding curatorial captions in a welter of typefaces, ransom-note style. His magazine is as unexpected as a tumbleweed.

Rothbart, who is twenty-seven, lives with his parents in Ann Arbor, Michigan. About once a year, he puts out an issue of *Found;* the rest of the time he is usually writing short stories, editing a documentary film about life in inner-city Washington, D.C., or working on a rap album. At the moment, he is driving around the country in a rented Mitsubishi Galant, visiting bookstores and coffeehouses in fifty cities to meet his subscribers and appraise their finds, like a one-man "Antiques Roadshow." The best material will end up in the Found Archives, also known as his parents' basement.



Davy Rothbart

Last week, Rothbart was in New York, and he spent an afternoon rummaging near Tompkins Square Park. A friendly, red-haired man with green eyes and tapered sideburns that meet under his jaw, forming a chin strap of hair, he was wearing lime-green pants from an Albuquerque thrift store and a red sweatshirt with "Ebony Ladies" stencilled on the back (a girl in St. Louis found it and had given it to him). He carried a found Book-of-the-Month Club tote bag stuffed with booty. The over-all effect was of a hobo Santa. In Brooklyn, he'd been presented with a castoff Dunkin' Donuts nametag that said only "Name"; in Providence, a discarded valentine scrawled in pencil ("Roses are Red / Violets are Blue / I'm in love but / Not with You!!!"); in Traverse City, Michigan, a forsaken lamprey in a jar of formaldehyde, with a Post-It note on the lid saying, "Flaky and self-conscious."

As Rothbart walked through the park, his eyes scanned every bush and trash can, flicking past dozens of menus, flyers, paper plates, movie stubs, parking tickets, and A.T.M. receipts. He was looking for handwriting—the stamp of the personal. "I wanted to try this area because my mom used to live here, in the sixties," he said. "Also, there are a lot of schools near here, and kids are great losers of things."

At Eighth Street and Avenue B, Rothbart found three bills from a physical-therapy office in Bloomfield, Connecticut. " 'Neuromuscular Re-education' and 'Ther. Activities,' four hundred and twenty dollars," he read out, musingly. "There's a story here, just a piece of it."

At Ninth and C, he came upon a small orange ball with faded lettering reading "Super Star." "One of my favorite things—a deflated mini-basketball!" he said, nudging it with his foot. At the foot of a chain-link fence, he unearthed a grimy bumper sticker advertising a band called INDK. "INDK, INDK," he repeated. "Everything is in decay."

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Rothbart discovered a fund-raising letter addressed to an alumnus of the High Mowing School, in New Hampshire. "'Varied images rise up in our minds as we reflect on our youthful days: the classrooms, a stroll through the woods, roll call in the Big Room, quiet time in the chapel,' " he read, holding the letter delicately, by its edges. "But this High Mowing graduate threw the appeal away. Part of these notes' story is that they were lost or abandoned. He got kicked out, there was a fire, she died. There's a lot of sadness in the world, for sure."

A few seconds later, Rothbart stiffened. "My Spidey sense is tingling," he said. Across the parking lot of the Mary Help of Christians School, fifty yards away, he'd seen a scrap of white. He maneuvered past a group of schoolgirls in navy uniforms who blocked the lot's entrance. "Excuse me!" one girl shouted, swinging her book bag sassily. "You're not supposed to be in here!"

"Just picking up something I dropped," he said.

"I'm watching you!" she said.

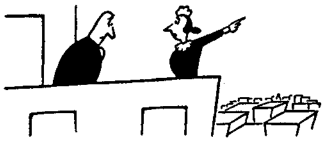
"I'm watching you, too," he said, turning and smiling.

He returned with a drawing of a girl. Her eyes were crescents of green Magic Marker, her hair a swoosh of red, and she had blue feet-blobs at the end of stick legs. You could picture a girl bending low over her subject's green eyes, barely breathing as she filled them in. "I'm guessing she's about nine," Rothbart said, studying it. He looked happy. "This is how I feel a lot of the time. Weary, heavy-lidded, and yet sort of pleased with the world. This is my favorite thing!" He tucked the paper into his tote bag. Then he was back in his rental car, heading toward Cleveland and points west.

—*Tad Friend*

DEPT. OF COMMEMORATION

LESS OR MORE



When it comes to Ground Zero, just about the only thing that everyone agrees on is that there ought to be a memorial to the people who died there. No one, though, seems to have the slightest idea what this memorial should be, or whether it should be a physical structure at all.

The issues have been fought over at countless public hearings and forums, but last week Diana Balmori, a landscape architect who teaches at Yale, and Marian Imperatore, an architect and consultant, decided that it was time for a private forum, out of range of some of the more passionate constituents. The women, who head the memorials committee of the Civic Alliance, a consortium of civic groups active in the planning process, invited a group of writers and scholars to Balmori's loft, high above Broome Street in SoHo, to talk about what kind of memorial they wanted.

"This began with the idea of raising the discussion to a higher level than whether or not the footprint of the towers should be preserved," Balmori said.

Thirteen people gathered around an elliptical table, in a room with spectacular views both south and north. "The real question we have to start with is how you can express what Tony Hiss calls 'a place of hurt,' " Balmori said, looking across the table at Hiss, the author of "The Experience of Place," who was one of the guests. "Is it morally right to show scars? Or is the better thing to rebuild as if nothing had happened?"

Among the other guests were Kate Cooper, an American who teaches history at Manchester University, in England, and who studies how the dead were memorialized in classical times, and Kenneth Jackson, the president of the New-York Historical Society. For the first few minutes, however, the conversation was dominated by Nikki Stern, whose husband died in the Trade Center attacks, and Tom Rogér, whose daughter was a flight attendant aboard Flight 11, which crashed into the north tower. Stern and Rogér, unlike many of the victims' families, are reconciled to the idea that Ground Zero should have plenty of other things besides a memorial. "It will be for the living," Rogér said.

"This is not Gettysburg to me," Stern said. "It is not a battleground."

"People believe that there is a clean sheet of paper here, and it has driven them to extremes," Rogér said. "The commercial people want more office space, the green people want it to be all green, the memorial people want the whole site—they are out of control. Everybody can't have everything."

"I am worried that it will be overplanned," Stern said. "We should infuse the site with a feeling of memorialization, so the memory of what happened is everywhere—but I don't know how that should be done."

"You know, I was talking to the people who own the World Financial Center, and I asked them why they felt they had to replace the stone that was scarred in the explosions," Robert Yaro, who heads the Regional Plan Association, said. "Why not leave it?"

Kenneth Jackson pointed out that there were still pockmarks in the limestone façade of 23 Wall Street, a vestige of the bombing, in 1920, of J. P. Morgan's headquarters. "They have great power to them," Jackson said. "They could have been removed, but they were not."

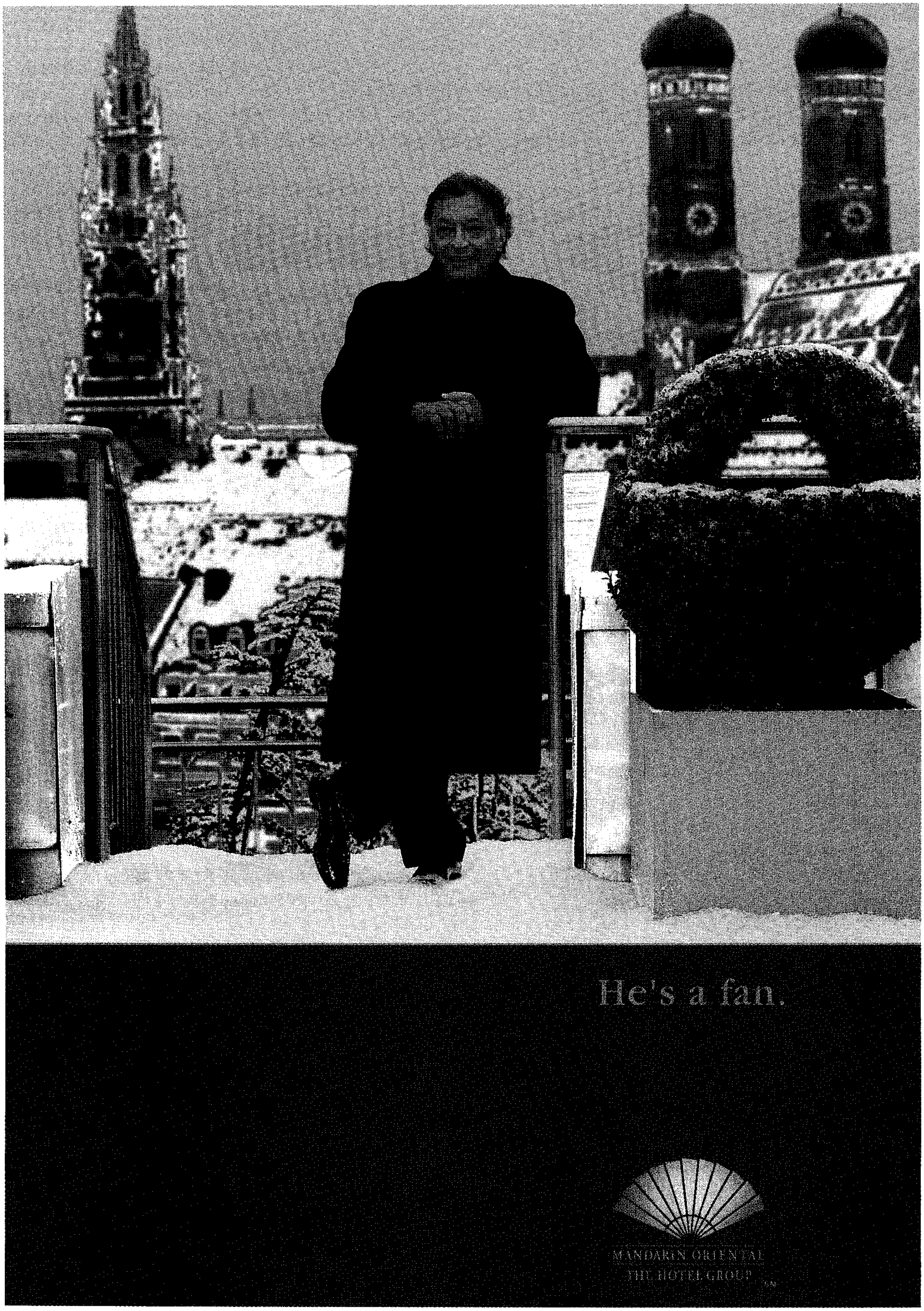
James Sanders, who collaborated with Ric Burns on his fifteen-hour film series about New York, chimed in. "There are two contradictory impulses—the desire to rebuild that part of the city better, more vibrantly, than before, and the need to memorialize," he said. "In New York, we do not integrate memorials very well with the rest of city life, the way in Paris there is the Panthéon and a little café in front of it."

"No, I think that what is being memorialized is ordinary human life, and New York is full of bricolage—this city is very good at it," Cooper said.

Anne Nelson, a playwright, argued for keeping a piece of the Trade Center's foundation visible. (One might think of it as a kind of open wound.) Sanders suggested that New Yorkers are fundamentally uncomfortable with making much of the city's past. "New York is about the deal we make tomorrow, not about something that happened twenty years ago," he said. "The Triangle Shirtwaist fire is one of the worst things that have ever happened here. And it is commemorated only with a plaque."

"No, there is more than that," Cooper said. "After the Triangle fire, every fire door opened outward, and that is a huge social change. The world changed in response to what happened—isn't that a memorial?"

—*Paul Goldberger*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THE FINANCIAL PAGE
BOOM AND GLOOM

A few years ago, the Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman conducted an odd experiment. He had a group of students eat a bowl of their favorite ice cream while listening to a particular piece of music eight days in a row. After the first day, Kahneman asked them to predict how they'd feel about the whole experience once it was over. Their predictions turned out to be way off base. Some students who thought that they'd hate having to eat the same flavor eight days in a row became addicted to it. Some who thought they'd enjoy the experience were eventually repulsed by it. The upshot: people may know when they're happy, but they often don't know what will make them happy.

That poses a problem for the basic tenets of modern economics: that people act in their own self-interest most of the time, and that they usually know what that self-interest is. "Well-being is actually the central idea of economics," the Princeton economist Alan Krueger said last week. "But we've never really tried to measure it. We've said, If we're richer, and we have more options, we must be better off. But we haven't tried to find out if it's really true."

Now that is changing. In the past few years, a loose collection of economists and psychologists have started to take seriously the question of happiness and its relation to the economy as a whole. Inspired by experiments like Kahneman's, they have decided that if you want to understand the real impact of things like booms and busts you can't just look at what people do. You have to try to understand—using psychological experiments, long-term national surveys, and macroeconomic studies—how they feel. Krueger and Kahneman, a Princeton colleague, are trying to come up with an accurate way of measuring economic well-being—a sort of G.D.P. of mood. In the meantime, economists are using the flawed measures of happiness that we're currently stuck with to tell us some very interesting things, such as why the economic sentiment seems so bleak, even though the American economy is four trillion dollars bigger and vastly more productive than it was a decade ago.

There was, for example, the pleasant experiment devised by an M.I.T. psychologist named Dan Ariely. Ariely had each of forty volunteers put "a selected finger" in a vise. Each volunteer endured a series of trials, in which the pressure was kept constant for the whole trial, increased, or decreased. (There was no ice cream.) After each trial, the volunteers, having removed their fingers from the vise, were asked to rate the pain. On average, they said—not surprisingly—that it hurt a lot. What was notable, however, was that when the volunteers had been subjected to decreasing pressure they reported less pain than when the pressure was maintained or increased, even though Ariely had made sure to apply the same amount of total force in each trial.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The vise experiment was a perfect illustration of something that Kahneman calls the Peak/End rule. When people assess a past experience, they pay attention above all to two things: how it felt at the peak and whether it got better or worse at the end. A mild improvement—even if it's an improvement from "intolerable" to "pretty bad"—makes the whole experience seem better, and a bad ending makes everything seem worse. That might help explain why Americans feel so gloomy. Even after the stock-market crash and the recession of 2001, the country is still a lot richer than it would have been had we muddled through the past decade. But the severity of the bust has overshadowed all the real benefits that we reaped from the boom. We might actually feel better now if we had endured years of mediocre but steady growth instead of a precipitous rise and fall.

The fact that we're earning more may not be enough to cancel out the effects of an insecure labor market and a manic-depressive stock market. Though one can say, with reasonable confidence, that rich people tend to be happier than poor people, there's surprisingly little evidence that becoming richer actually increases people's happiness. The first important study of national well-being, by the economist Richard Easterlin, found that once a country achieves a certain level of wealth getting richer makes no difference. And a famous 1978 study of lottery winners found that a year after hitting the jackpot they were barely happier than a control group of regular shlubs.

Why? One suggestion is that people are on what's sometimes called a "hedonic treadmill," meaning that as they get wealthier they quickly adapt to their new circumstances. At first, you love your Lexus, but before long it may as well be your old Pinto. But if you lose the Lexus, you don't easily get over it. "Loss makes you more unhappy than gain makes you happy," Krueger says. Certainly that's true of American businesses. They are, generally speaking, still profitable, but they can't help but sulk after the crumbling of their boom-time dreams.

The big question facing the U.S. economy right now may be one that the happiness-studies people are only starting to think about: Can unhappiness hurt an economy? Studies have shown that self-described happy people earn more and are more productive. (Of course, we don't know if success makes them happy, or vice versa.) And, clearly, economic malaise can feed on itself: glum investors turn miserly, consumers get tight, and businessmen balk at risk. Hard as it may be to believe, the future of the U.S. economy looks bright, in the long term. But to get there we might just need to look on the sunny side.

—*James Surowiecki*

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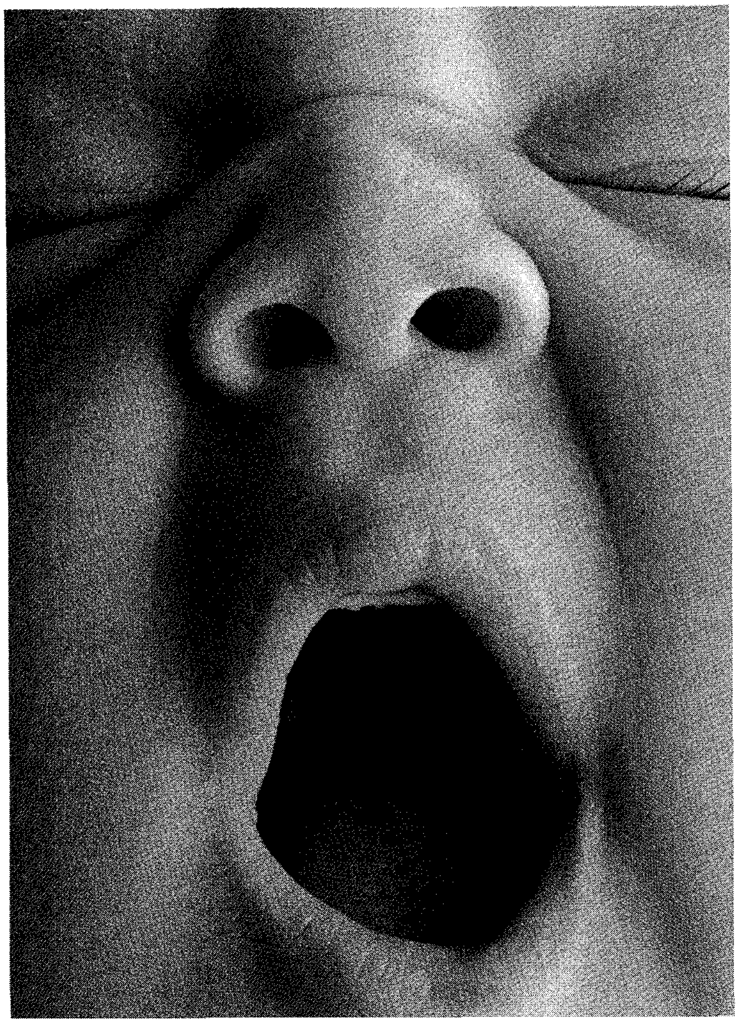

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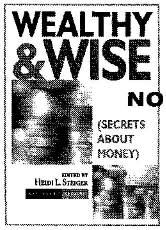

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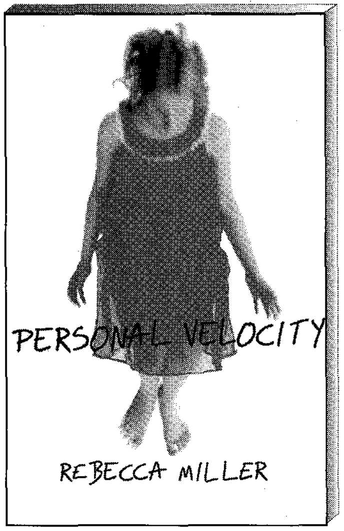

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DEPT. OF HUMOR

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

A scientific attempt to discover why we laugh.

BY TAD FRIEND

One Saturday evening in late June, the master of ceremonies at the Ice House, a comedy club in Pasadena, California, told the audience that they were in for a special treat: Dr. Richard Wiseman, a British scientist who was on a quest to determine the world's funniest joke, was going to come out and enlist the audience's help. The m.c., Debi Gutierrez, would tell jokes that particularly appealed to Americans who had visited Wiseman's humor Web site, and he would tell jokes favored by the British.

Wiseman bounded up and perched on a stool facing Gutierrez, a brassy woman in her early forties. "May I call you Richard?" she asked.

"You can call me what you want," Wiseman said.

"Dr. *Dick!*" she said. The audience whooped, and Wiseman offered a game smile. In a navy-blue T-shirt, khakis, and tortoise-rimmed glasses, with a Vandyke beard balancing his baldness, he looked like a particularly helpful store manager at the Gap. In fact, at the age of thirty-five, Wiseman—a professor at the University of Hertfordshire and the director of its Perrott-Warrick Research Unit—is Britain's most recognizable psychologist, famous for such mass-participation experiments as determining whether people can most easily detect lies told on television, on the radio, or in print. (It's on the radio.) Since last fall, he has been conducting a global humor study at LaughLab.co.uk, a Web site where visitors submit jokes and rate other people's jokes on a five-point scale called, somewhat unrigorously, the Giggleometer. When the experiment began, Wiseman posed for publicity photographs wearing a lab coat and holding a clipboard as he scrutinized a student wearing a chicken suit who was crossing a road. One photographer shouted, "Could the guy playing the scientist move to the left?," and Wiseman cried, "I *am* a scientist."

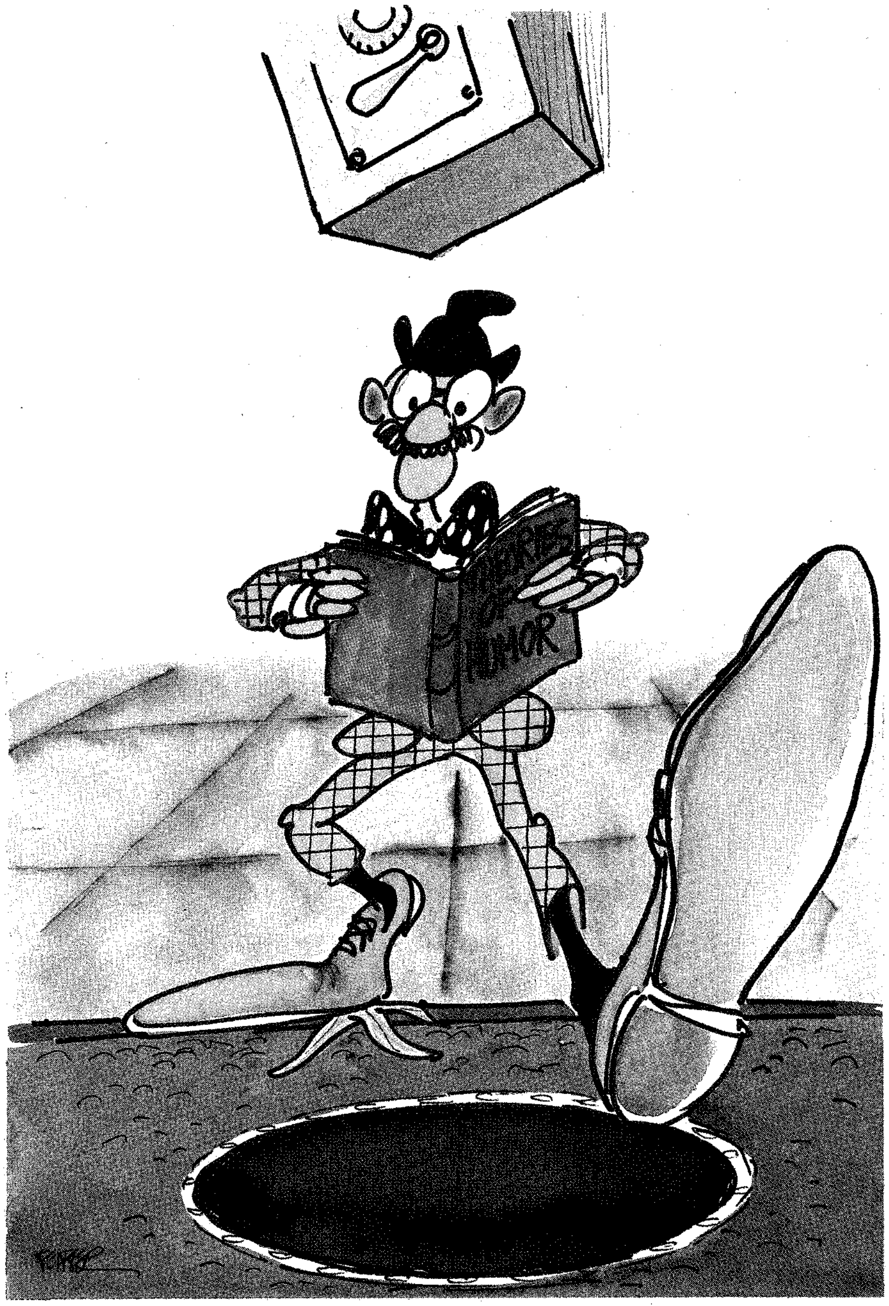
The experiment was so popular—the LaughLab site got three million hits in the first five days—that Wiseman's server blew out. He now has a repository of forty thousand jokes, some two-thirds of which are so racist, violent, or dirty that he can't post them for the site's visitors, a good number of whom, judging by their submissions ("What's brown and sticky? A stick!" cropped up three hundred and fifty-three times), won't be eligible for membership in the Friars Club for some years to come.

At the Ice House, Gutierrez read a Viagra joke and botched the punch line. Then it was Wiseman's turn. He is not a joke-teller by nature, and his recital was almost apologetic: "Guy goes to the doctor, who gives him a checkup. 'How long have I got to live, doc?' 'Ten.' 'Ten what? Weeks? Months?' 'Ten, nine, eight . . .' "

There are many ways that people laugh in a comedy club. There's what you might call the Anticipator ("He just mentioned Monica Lewinsky! This'll be great!"), the Clapper ("It's about time someone called bin Laden a terrorist!"), the Aficionados' Simper, the Coerced Snicker, the You-Crossed-the-Line "Ooh" (reserved for a Kennedy joke), the Gut Buster, and so forth. But there's only one kind of silence.

Gutierrez, referring to her notes, tried a feeble sally about a preacher. Gloom settled over the room. So she put her script aside and barked, "Two faggots and a midget walk into a bar—" The audience cracked up for four long, joyous seconds. Comedians relish a two-second laugh; four seconds is standup gold.

Why, after a string of failed jokes, such a big laugh? It's hard to say. Comedy theorists—philosophers, psychologists, comedy writers, and, most recently, neurologists—have yet to resolve even such seemingly simple questions as where knock-knock jokes come from, why you can't tickle yourself, and whether any woman anywhere, ever, has appreciated the Three Stooges. Technically, Gutierrez's remark wasn't a joke but a setup to



Comedians and comedy writers believe that comedy is more art than science.

JULES FEIFFER

a joke, and a hostile, slurring setup at that. In 1993, Robert R. Provine, a behavioral neuroscientist, conducted a study of laughter in social settings—basically, he eavesdropped at cocktail parties—and discovered that the biggest laugh-getters were not punch lines or bons mots but such you-had-to-be-there remarks as "I'll see you guys later" and "Must be nice!" and "You just farted!"

In other words, something's being "funny" is not an adequate explanation of laughter. Is humor a temperament or a talent? Is it innate and individual and evolutionarily adaptive, or learned and cultural and gloriously pointless? "What does laughter mean?" the French philosopher Henri Bergson wrote in 1901. "The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation." Unfortunately, Aristotle's treatise on laughter, which might have settled the whole matter, was lost to history.

Richard Wiseman told me that his own efforts to advance humor theory had begun almost in jest. "I was asked if I had any ideas for the government's Science Year," Wiseman said, "and I instantly thought, World's funniest joke! With one sentence, you've sold the project. Of course, the idea of scientifically determining the world's funniest joke is completely ridiculous. People thought we'd have a computer that would tell you 'Why did the chicken cross the road?' is objectively a 4 on a scale of 5. And the point is that you can't get a computer to do it—humor is a thoroughly human activity, and very, very hard to explain."

And yet as Wiseman began combing through his site's top two thousand jokes, preparing to announce his findings this fall, he was nagged by patterns. At times, comedy seems reminiscent of mathematics: as John Allen Paulos observed in his book "Mathematics and Humor," both disciplines prize ingenuity, concision, literal-mindedness, and the use or misuse of logical notions such as presupposition, disguised equivalence, non sequitur, and reductio ad absurdum. Wiseman found that joke themes kept recurring, too. "There seem to be only about four jokes that come up all the time," he told me. "Someone trying to look clever and taking a pratfall. Husbands and wives not being loving. Doctors being insensitive about imminent death. And God making a mistake.

"We've learned one thing for sure, though," he continued. "Comparing scores for the same joke with different animals inserted in it, we found that the funniest animal of all is a duck. So science has determined that, if you're going to tell a talking-animal joke, make it a duck."

How the body laughs is well understood. Amusement initiates the coordinated action of fifteen facial muscles, beginning with a lift of the eyebrows and a series of eye- and cheek-muscle contractions known as the "surprise response." What follows are spasmodic skeletal muscle contractions, a quickened heartbeat, and rapid breathing. The diaphragm contracts in clonic movements that crescendo and then diminish. (The "ha ha ho ho he" laugh is common, but you never hear "ha ho ha ho ha" or "he ho he.")

How the brain processes humor remains a mystery. It's easy to make someone smile or cry by electronically stimulating a single region of the brain, but it's astonishingly difficult to make someone laugh. The "laughter circuit" is complex and various. Puns are processed on the left side of the brain by gyri, bumpy areas on the surface of the cerebral cortex; more

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complex, non-wordplay jokes are routed through gyri on the right side of the brain and also trigger electronic activity in many other parts of the brain.

One way of thinking about this is that the left side of the brain cognitively "sets up" the joke and the right side emotionally "gets it." In a 1981 paper in *Brain and Language*, the researchers Wendy Wapner, Suzanne Hamby, and Howard Gardner concluded that the left hemisphere of the brain is a "highly efficient, but narrowly programmed linguistic computer; in contrast the right hemisphere constitutes a suitable audience for a humorous silent film." They explained, "While the left hemisphere might appreciate some of Groucho's puns, and the right hemisphere might be entertained by the antics of Harpo, only the two hemispheres united can appreciate a whole Marx Brothers routine." Neither hemisphere, apparently, thinks much of Chico.

In the early sixties, Lenny Bruce inaugurated a routine that stunned audiences in San Francisco and New York clubs. One evening, Bruce's short riff convulsed the crowd for an astounding seventeen seconds:

> "If you've, er, [*pause*] ever seen this bit before, I want you to tell me. Stop me if you've seen it. [*Long pause*] I'm going to piss on you."

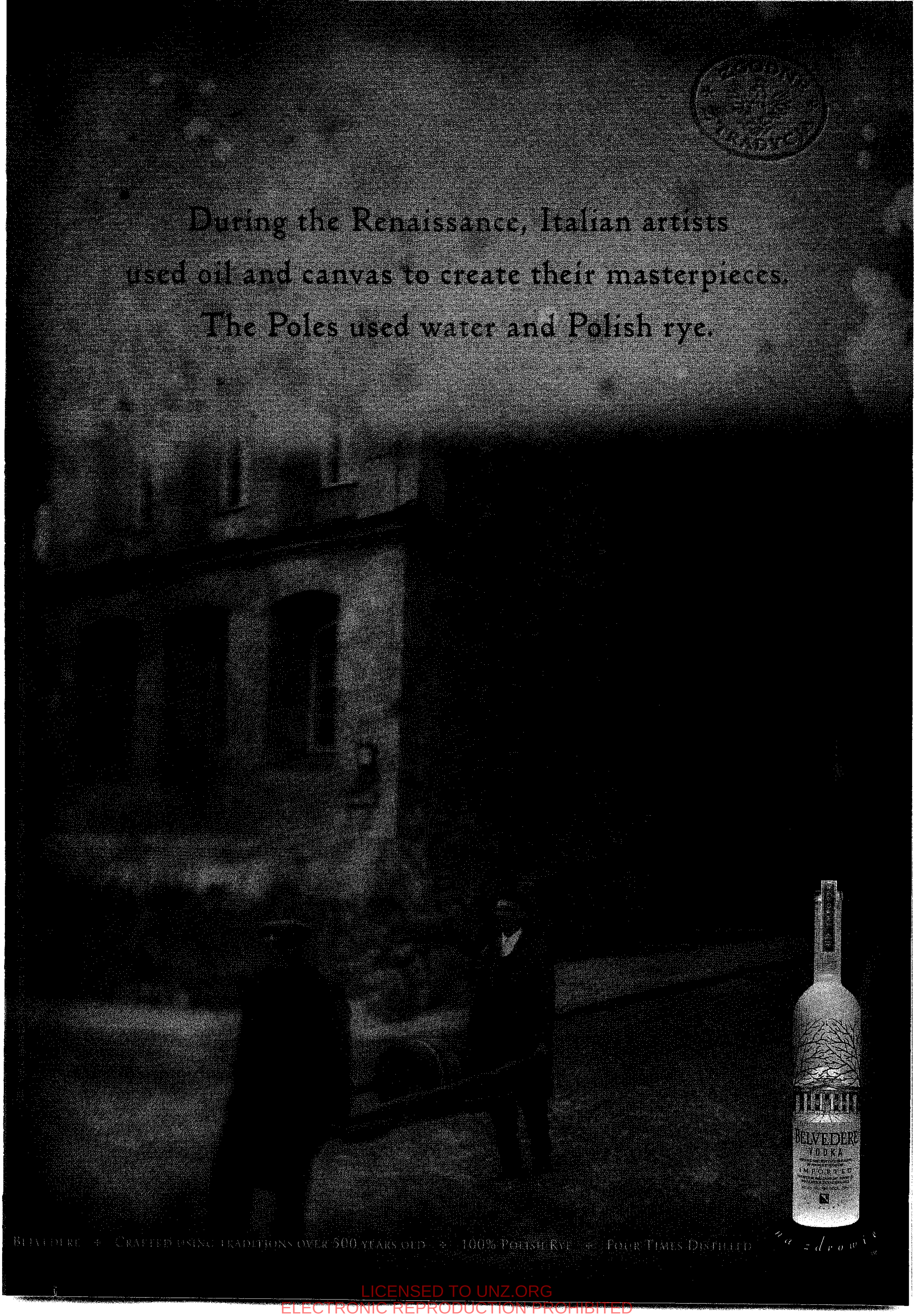
History's first humor theory offers a compelling explanation for how Bruce's joke worked. "Superiority theory" began with Plato and Aristotle, but Thomas Hobbes provided its first full explanation in "Leviathan," published in 1651: laughter, he wrote, is provoked by the "sudden glory" attending a perception of one's own mighty powers "or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another." According to superiority theory, the audience loved Bruce's joke because it identified with him, the swaggering aggressor—or, alternatively, because Bruce was suddenly revealed as beneath contempt. (Audiences have felt superior to the people who make them laugh since at least the Middle Ages, when dwarves and hunchbacks were used as court jesters. A 1976 study found that when subjects were asked to characterize American comedians, people often said "skinny," "fat," "ugly," "clumsy," "stupid," "weird," or "deformed.")

"Incongruity theory," the most widely accepted humor doctrine today, was born in the seventeenth century, when Blaise Pascal wrote, "Nothing produces laughter more than a surprising disproportion between that which one expects and that which one sees." According to incongruity theory, in the joke "I went to my doctor for shingles—he sold me aluminum siding," our (tiny) pleasure arises in two stages: surprise and then coherence. The seeming story line of the joke (the doctor will treat shingles, the disease) collapses, but we instantly realize that the anomaly can be explained by another story line (the doctor sells shingles, the product).

A few years ago, an Austrian psychologist and humor researcher named Willibald Ruch suggested that there is a third stage after the surprise and coherence stages. (Ruch is the president of an academic group called the International Society for Humor Studies; at the I.S.H.S.'s annual conference this summer, presentations included "One of the Last Vestiges of Gender Bias: The Characterization of Women Through the Telling of Dirty Jokes in 'Ally McBeal' " and "Connection Between Sense of Humor and Well Being at Work of Finnish Police Officers.") In this new wrinkle on incongruity theory, the third stage is "detecting that actually what makes sense . . . is pleasant nonsense," that "the ability to 'make sense,' to solve problems, has been 'misused'—and this feeling is generally associated with pleasure." This third-stage realization, Ruch says, is what makes us laugh. Forty years ago, well before the advent of insult comics like Sam Kinison and Andrew Dice Clay, we didn't expect a comedian to suddenly and nonsensically threaten to piss on us, so incongruity theory offers a convincing explanation for the success of Lenny Bruce's joke.

"Release theory," which still has its adherents, holds that humor mines repressed sources of pleasure in the unconscious. Its leading proponent was Sigmund Freud, who, in "Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious" (1905), declared that jokes are our way of expressing otherwise taboo wishes (sleeping with your mother, killing your father, etc.). John Limon, in his recent book "Stand-Up Comedy in Theory, or, Abjection in America," suggested that comedy arises from "a psychic worrying of those aspects of oneself that one cannot be rid of . . . blood, urine, feces, nails, and the corpse." Lenny Bruce's aggressive peeing joke fits well with Freud's notions, too.

Henri Bergson, a contemporary of Freud, proposed the related notion of machine theory to explain why something is funny. Bergson suggested that we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laugh at other people's rigidity, at the "mechanical encrusted on something living." As the comedian Mike Myers observed in an e-mail to me, "Comedy characters tend to be a _____ machine; i.e., Clouseau was a *smug* machine, Pepe Le Pew was a *love* machine, Felix Unger was a *clean* machine, and Austin Powers is a *sex* machine."

In recent years, evolutionary biologists have turned the focus from what makes us laugh to why we bother. The neuroscientist V. S. Ramachandran, in "Phantoms in the Brain" (1998), written with Sandra Blakeslee, provided incongruity theory with a nifty evolutionary rationale. Ramachandran suggested that laughter occurs as a result of a spurious threat: the insular cortex signals something alarming and then the anterior cingulate gyrus, which detects incongruities, responds, "Don't worry, no threat." Ramachandran and Blakeslee write, "The main purpose of laughter might be to allow the individual to alert others in the social group (usually kin) that the detected anomaly is trivial, nothing to worry about."

Because most of these theories apply equally well to Lenny Bruce's joke and to many other comic situations—and therefore equally badly—a few eccentrics have chosen to chart their own paths. The most famous of the rogue explorers is Del Close, a mentor to John Belushi, John Candy, Bill Murray, and Mike Myers. Close co-founded Chicago's ImprovOlympic, a theatre for sketch artists, and he and his creative partner, Charna Halpern, devised the influential long-form group-improvisational technique known as "the Harold." Close also dreamed up the comedy-sketch program "Second City TV," ran light shows for the Grateful Dead, and smoked a truly staggering amount of pot. He died of emphysema in 1999, at the age of sixty-four.

A few months ago, I went to Chicago to take a look at Close's notebook, which contained an attempt at a unifying theory. I met Charna Halpern at the ImprovOlympic, where she still trains comedic actors, down the street from Wrigley Field. We sat in the empty theatre and discussed Close's insight into why comedy relies on patterns of three. There is a long-standing tradition—Leo McCarey, who directed the early Laurel and Hardy films, called it "almost an unwritten rule"—that jokes work best when there are two straightforward examples, to establish a pattern, and then a third, to shatter it. ("My favorite books are 'Moby-Dick,' 'Great Expectations,' and 'Rock Hard Abs in Thirty Days.' ") The "rule of three" also holds that a running gag should be called back three times. The joke begins losing its savor the fourth time (and then, according to "comedy torture theory," becomes funny again about the seventh time, as the audience realizes that the performer is being deliberately exasperating).

"Del's theory was that we have three brains," Halpern said. "The joke is got first by our reptile brain, which appreciates slapstick, then by our mammalian brain," which, Close believed, handles wants and needs. (The few documented instances of animal humor are physical in nature. The researcher Roger Fouts reported in 1997 that Washoe, a chimpanzee he had taught to sign, once urinated on him while riding on his shoulders, then signed "Funny"—touching its nose—and snorted.) Finally, Halpern continued, "the joke reaches the human neocortex," which, in Close's view, was in charge of manners and customs. "By the time the neocortex gets it, it's hilarious." She shrugged. "Del might have been kidding—he might have just been high."

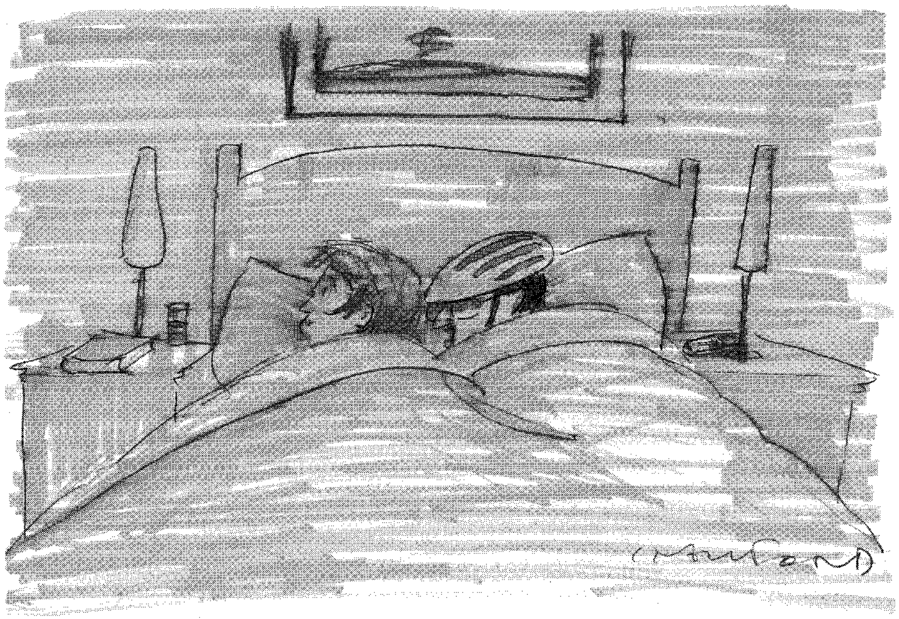
Halpern handed me one of Close's battered composition books. Inside were diagrams for a new kind of camera lens, a poem-play about Dwight Eisenhower and Ulysses Grant, and, boldly scrawled in green Magic Marker, "A 'Concise' Theory of Improvisational Theory." It was worrisome to see that "theory" was repeated and that "concise" was in quotation marks. Setting out rules for improvisation also seemed somewhat contradictory—one of those self-undermining statements which are a comedy staple (the shouted command to "Relax!," for instance, or Polonius' assertion, in the midst of an endless speech, that "brevity is the soul of wit").

Close began confidently, developing his idea that theatre is play, and that play can therefore rise to the status of theatre:

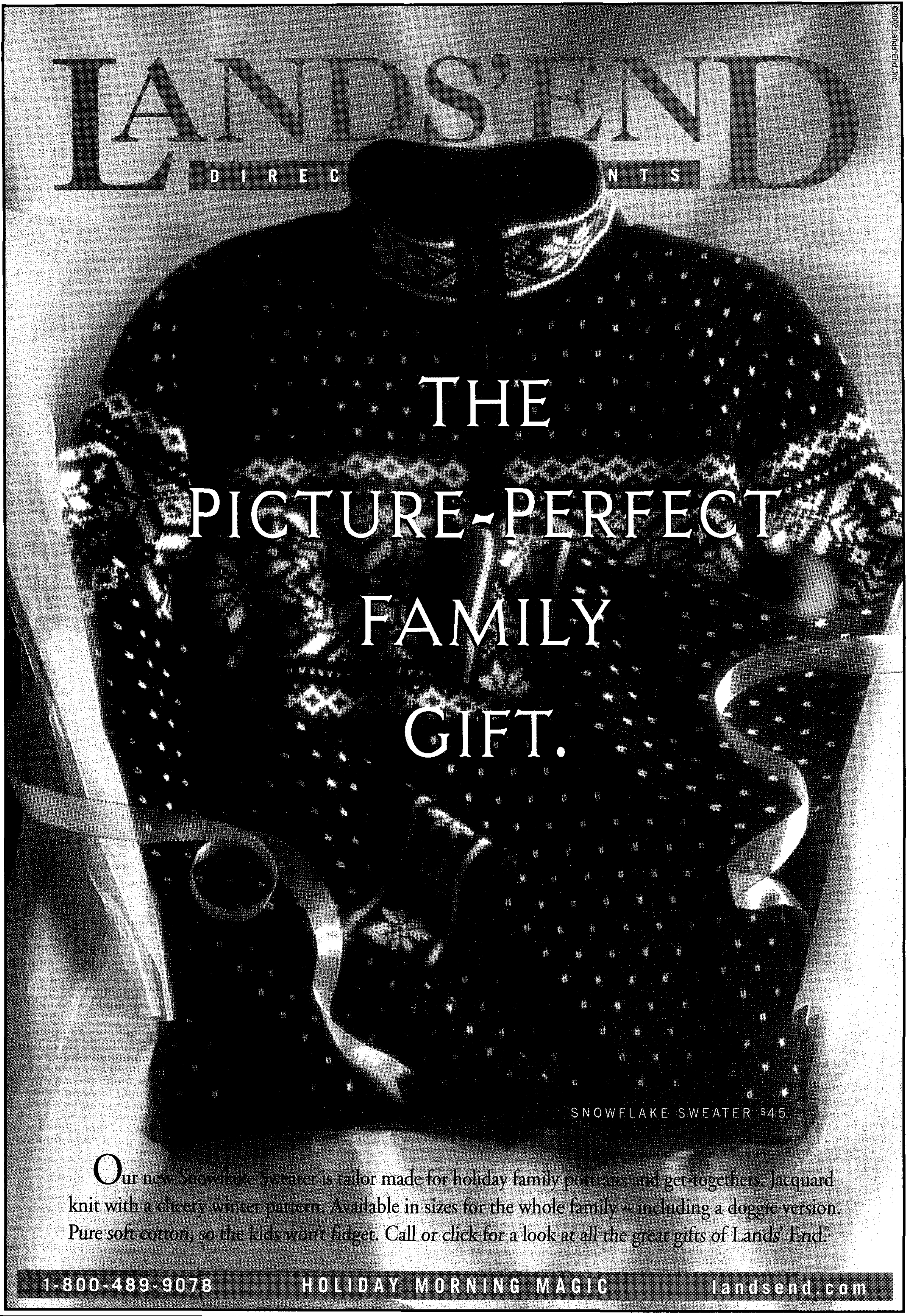
> 1. All human interactions—simple or complex—MAY be analyzed in terms of GAMES—(von Neumann, et al.), "A Theory of Games," decision theory, queuing theory, etc. on the mathematical side & Eric Berne & similar work on the psychological side. . . .
>
> 4. The further a game is *abstracted* from behavior, the easier it is to recognize it as a *game*. (Chess is difficult to confuse with warfare, but Boxing is hard to distinguish from a Brawl.)

But when he shifted to a black marker, and then another, heavier black marker—at about the point that he began trying to explain why, in James Bond films, the games of cards or golf are the best parts—his syllogisms began to wander. They soon stopped altogether. "The above logic is FACILE," Close concluded, trying to write himself out of the muddle, "but not specious."

Other people's comedy theories are



"On your left."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often inadvertently funny, in the same way that other people's physical pain and embarrassment are funny. Mel Brooks illuminated this problem when he defined tragedy and comedy: "Tragedy is if I cut my finger. Comedy is if you walk into an open sewer and die." With similarly blithe hostility, standup comedians talk about "cracking up" or "breaking up" the audience with "punch" lines, and equate success onstage with "killing." Monty Python did a sketch once about the world's funniest joke, which is so sidesplitting that it kills all who hear it. In the sketch, the joke is translated and shouted, devastatingly, against the Germans in the Second World War: "Wenn ist das Nunstruck git und Slotermeyer? Ja! . . . Beiherhund das Oder die Flipperwaldt gersput!" That sounds funny, and has the rhythm of a killer joke, but aside from a few actual German words it's nonsense.

Though Del Close never quite worked out all the details, he was convinced that laughter is related to our fear of death. In an e-mail, Mike Myers wrote, "Del Close said that there is very little difference between the realizations 'a-ha we are going to die,' and our laughter, which is 'ha-ha'—he would say that 'ha-ha' and 'a-ha' are related industries." Close's final words were "I'm tired of being the funniest one in the room." He willed his skull to Chicago's Goodman Theatre, where it sits in an acrylic box, intended for use in a future production of "Hamlet."

The University of Hertfordshire is a sprawling brown brick facility in Hatfield, a quiet town half an hour north of London. In the windowless core of the university's Perrott-Warrick Research Unit, which Richard Wiseman runs, is a small computer-server room that contains two loudly humming Macintosh G-4 computers, which, in turn, contain LaughLab. Wiseman has been spending a lot of his time in this room. One afternoon a few months ago, Dr. Jed Everitt, a physicist who wrote LaughLab's software, and who vets jokes for acceptability, brought up the most recently submitted jokes on one G-4, and Wiseman read over his shoulder. " 'What do you call a blonde with pigtails? A blow job with handlebars.' 'Blonde' is misspelled."

"It's not going on," Everitt said.

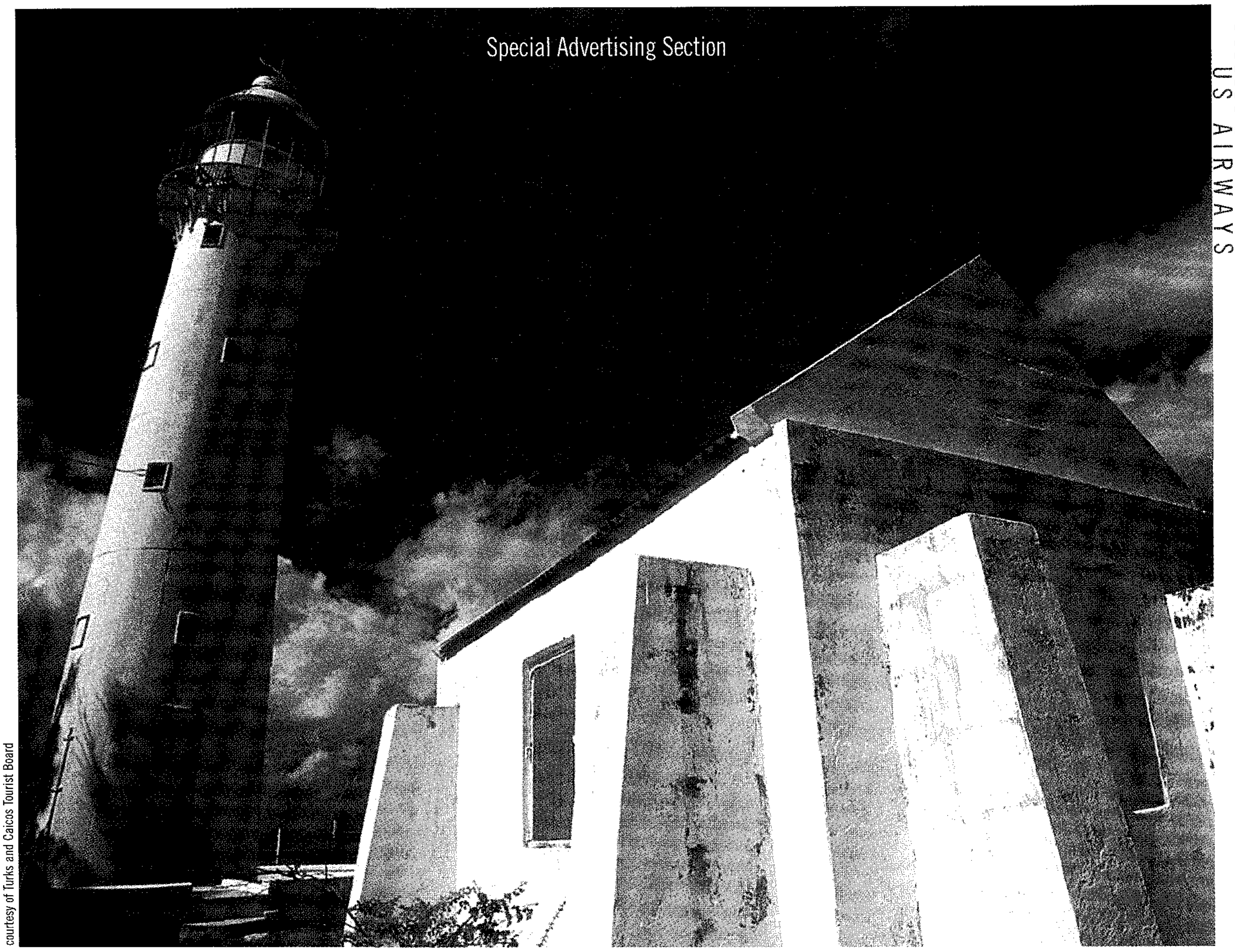
"The sad thing is, these people have the vote," Wiseman said.

"What I really like is when they explain the joke at the end," Everitt said.

"And when jokes come in from Sweden and Denmark people often write 'Hee hee hee' afterward. It seems to be a Scandinavian thing." Wiseman scrolled down. "Not on, not on, not on—most of the jokes won't make it. Some unfamiliar American terms get past—Oh, fine, let the beaver joke through—but, as it's for the government's Science Year, we replace 'a Pole' or 'a Belgian' in the ethnic jokes with 'an idiot.' The criticism we hear, and I totally agree, is 'You're taking out the best material!' "

In February, Wiseman was confounded when his site was flooded by more than three thousand different jokes from America, all featuring the same punch line. It turned out that the syndicated columnist Dave Barry had written a column riffing on Wiseman's interim report on his results, which noted, as Barry put it, that "women don't like jokes that involve aggression, sexuality, or offensiveness—also known as 'the three building blocks of humor.' " To improve the over-all joke quality, Barry asked his readers to submit to LaughLab jokes containing the phrase "There's a weasel chomping on my privates"—a line that incorporates aggression, sexuality, and offensiveness, at least to weasels. Because Barry also asked his readers to rate their fellow-readers' weasel jokes highly, one weasel zinger wound up as LaughLab's sixth-funniest entry.

This is just one of the methodological impurities that make Wiseman's study more suggestive than definitive, as he freely acknowledged. "Most science is top down," Wiseman said. "You start with a hypothesis and try to prove it. Laugh-



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This historic lighthouse, dating from 1852, presides over the aquamarine waters of the Turks and Caicos.

WINGED WANDERLUST

By RALPH DIGENNARO

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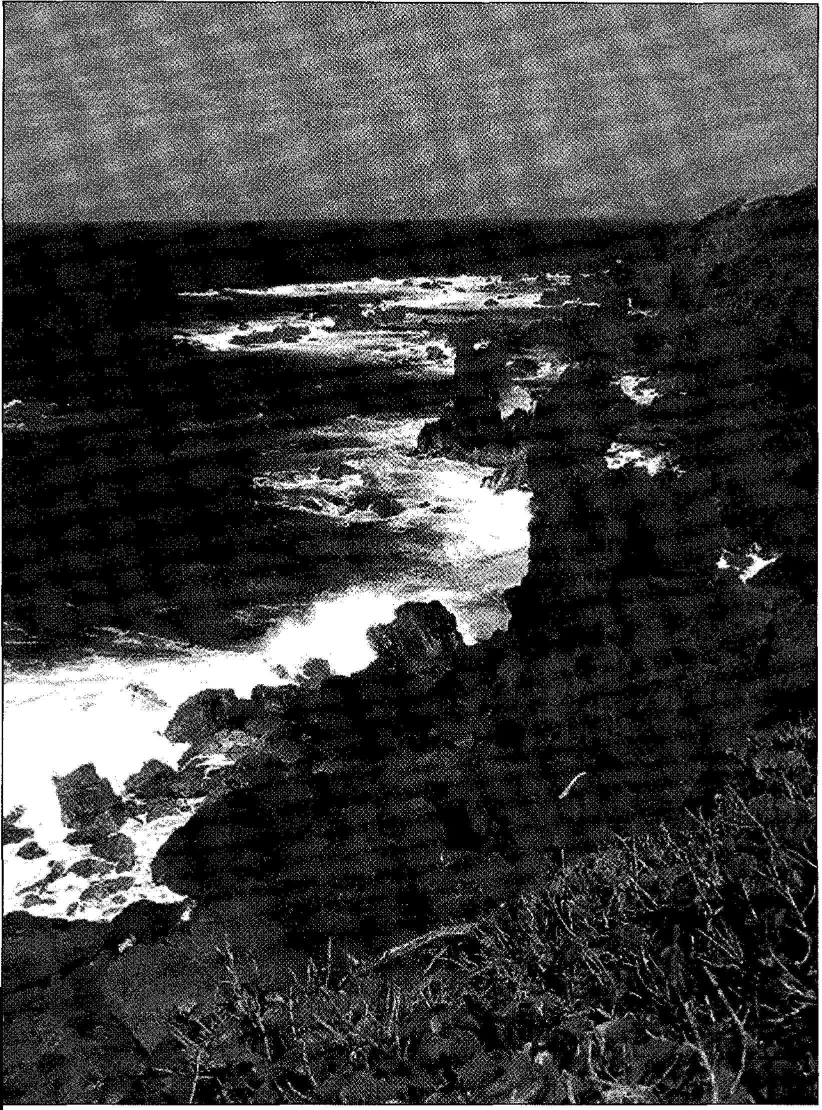

Lush St. Kitts has rocky shores and sugar-soft beaches.

far left: courtesy of Grenada Board of Tourism; *right:* courtesy of St. Kitts Tourism Authority/Paul Illsley

The St. George Saturday market in Grenada.

Starting this month, US Airways is adding service to Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands and Belize from Charlotte. Next month, it will also add service to St. Kitts and Grenada from Philadelphia.

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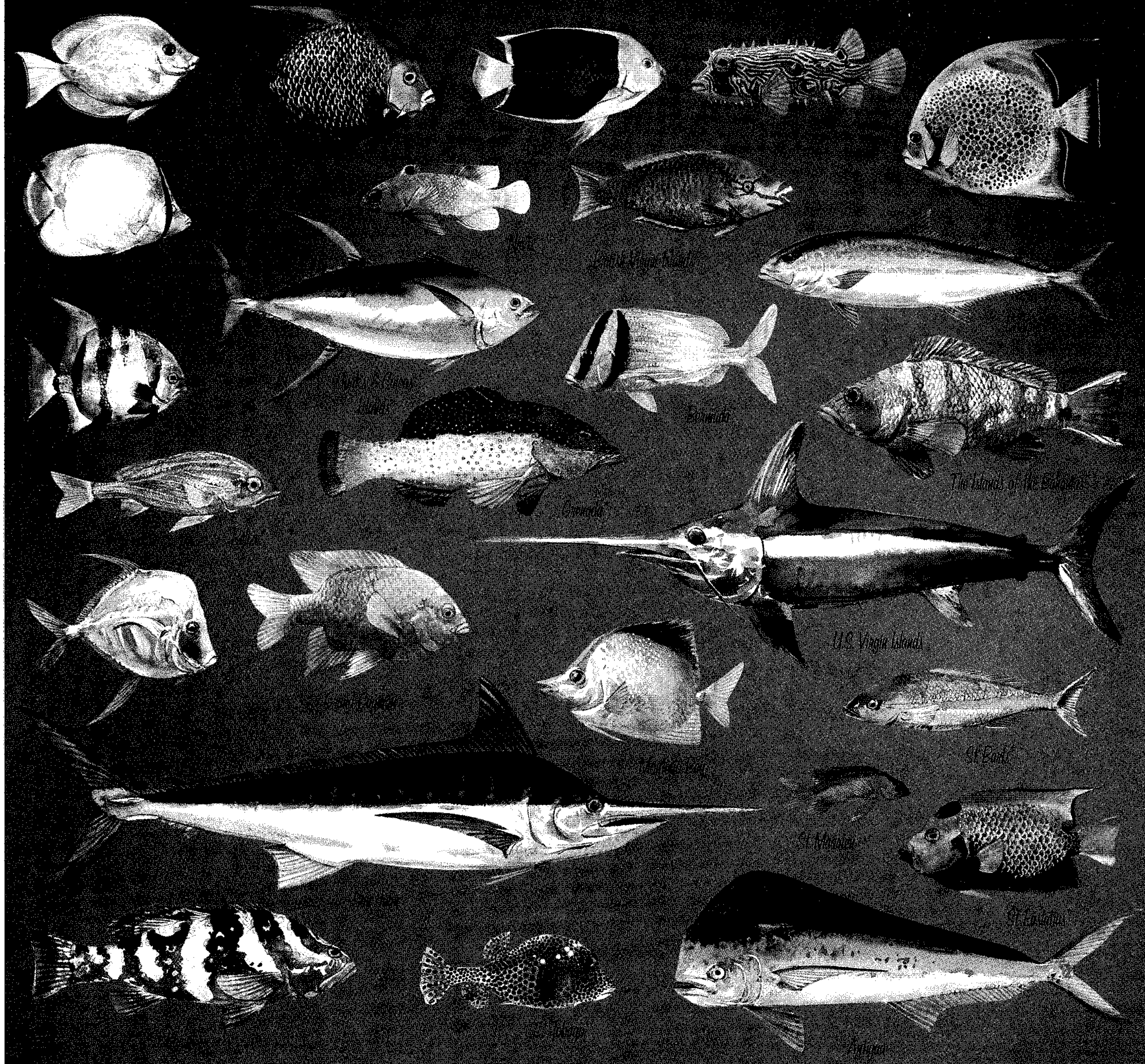
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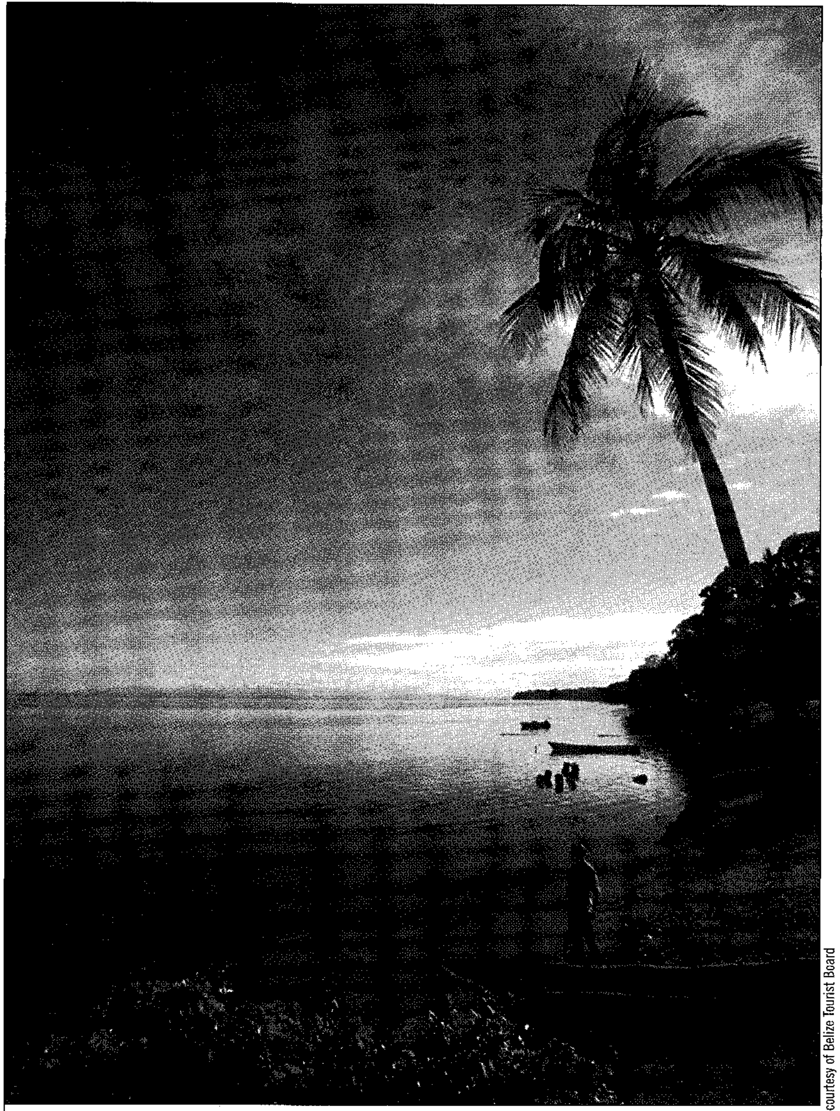

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The New River in Belize wends its way past a lush variety of flora, fauna, and wildlife.

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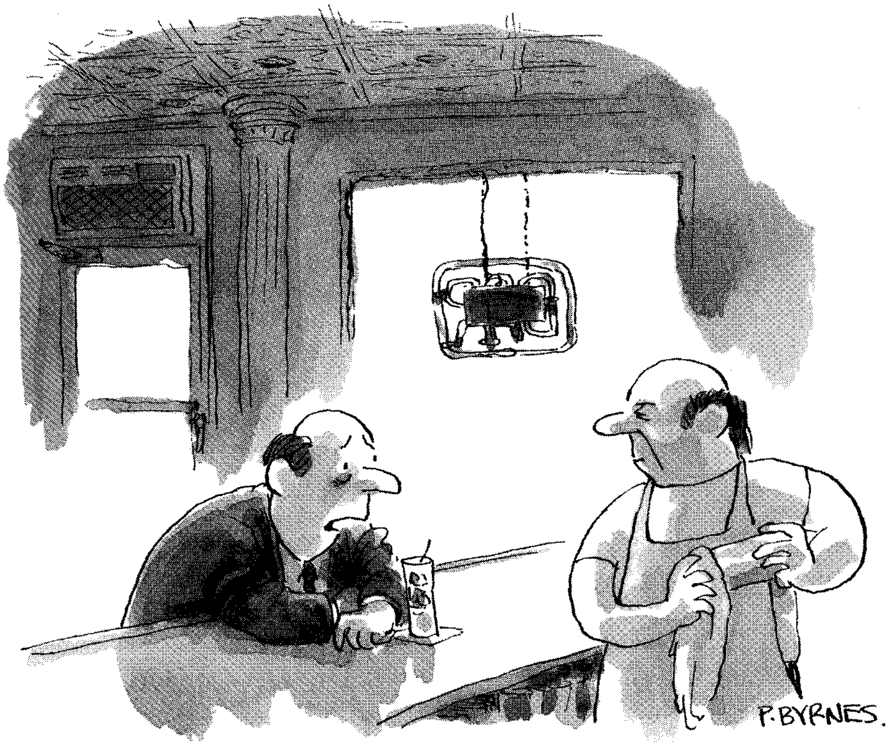

"She no longer laughs at my joke."

• •

Lab is bottom up: we're driven by what people give us. Masses of people come to the site, bother to type their jokes in, misspell most of the words, fuck up the punch line, and proudly submit it. Let's hear it!"

For a long time, the leading joke was the old groaner about Holmes and Watson going camping. (The punch line is "Watson, you idiot, somebody stole our tent!") "It's a terrible joke," Wiseman said. "When we measure the 'funniest' joke as the one that gets the most 4 and 5 ratings, it's going to be one that most people think is sort of O.K.—and not one that many people find hilarious. So our funniest joke is really going to be the least objectionable funnyish joke."

Another problem, from Wiseman's point of view, is that the country that finds LaughLab's jokes funniest is Germany. "Either Germans do have a very good sense of humor, after all," he said, doubtfully, "or there's not much funny happening in Germany, so any joke at all is seen as absolutely hilarious. Also, if you like LaughLab's jokes, it may not say much for your sense of humor."

It's not surprising that Wiseman's explanations slight the Germans, for humor analysis is as jingoistic as humor itself. Numerous "social-identity theory" studies have shown that the more jokes esteem a subject's own group and disparage alien groups, the funnier they are. Humor is often a means of saying, "We're civilized and you're not; we're human and you're not." In "An Essay on Comedy," written in 1877, the English novelist George Meredith claimed that refined humor flourishes only in societies with sexual equality, such as—ahem—Victorian England. "Where the veil is over women's faces," he wrote, "you cannot have society, without which the senses are barbarous and the Comic Spirit is driven to the gutters of grossness to slake its thirst. Arabs in this respect are worse than Italians—much worse than Germans."

Wiseman has one top-down hunch he'd like to prove. "We have some questions on the site designed to measure activity in the frontal lobe, the part of the brain involved with flexible thinking," he said. "We ask people to do an estimation task, such as 'Roughly how many words are on a page of a book?' The people who produce wild estimates—thousands of words!—have very bad flexible-thinking skills. One of their favorite jokes is 'What's pink and fluffy? Pink

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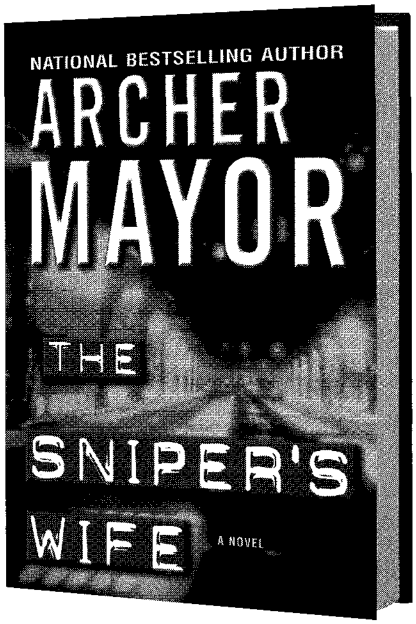

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fluff.' Whereas those who correctly guess 'under five hundred words' like conceptually difficult jokes. We're hoping the final results will enable us to say something science-y, like 'The frontal lobe explains why Germans like a certain kind of joke, explains the difference between men and women—men are more flexible thinkers—blah blah blah.' "

When scientists begin to diagram comedy, most comedians and comedy writers respond by saying, essentially, "Move along. Nothing to see here." Comedy is more art than science, its practitioners believe, and it's an art created not according to algorithms or invariate laws but in flashes of intuition fuelled by potato chips. In the late nineteen-eighties, before Conan O'Brien became a talk-show host, he wrote for "Saturday Night Live." His colleague Greg Daniels (who went on to co-create "King of the Hill") would often scribble pointers from Jim Downey, the show's producer, on scraps of paper. O'Brien offered an instructive rhyme of his own: "When you overthink, you start to stink."

Yet comedians have very definite ideas about specific techniques and scenarios that "work"—one of them being specificity itself. A joke is funnier if you say "Tropicana" rather than "orange juice." Other rules of thumb are that the punch line or "reveal word" of a joke should come last, and that you weaken a joke if you gussy it up with too much distracting whimsy, an error sometimes referred to as "frosting the flake" or "stacking the wack." So if you take the comedian Emo Philips's joke "I'd like to die in my sleep like my grandfather did, not screaming at the top of my lungs like the passengers in his car," it would be stacking the wack to make the punch line "like the passengers in his rented lime-green Yugo."

One of the oldest comedy dynamics is having a fuddy-duddy driven berserk by an impulsive child (Hera and Zeus; Mr. Mooney and Lucy). Sitcoms are rife with such formulas. "TVLand to Go," a book by Tim Hill, lists twenty-nine devices, including the slow burn, the spit take, "digging the hole deeper" (a man says his girlfriend's sister is "hot," explains that he meant she looks hot, in the warm weather, and goes on to say, "If she's hot, she shouldn't wear a sweater . . .," and so forth), and the "whee wohn"—the use of editing, sometimes punctuated by a wacky sound effect, to create comic transitions (Man: "You'll never see *me* in a dress!" Smash cut to the man in a gown: "Does this make my ass look fat?")

"If we don't go, do you suppose anyone is going to assume we weren't invited?"

Certain numbers are held to be wittier or more ludicrous than others: seventeen is generally considered pretty amusing, as are most primes, but the writers for Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows" believed that the funniest number was thirty-two. And many offbeat words have a comic valence. Woody Allen has relied on "feathers," "herring," "butter," and "dwarf"; Mel Brooks is fond of "nectarine" and "Saran Wrap." In the book "Comedy Techniques for Writers & Performers," Melvin Helitzer maintains that among the funniest names are Gladys, Chuck, José, Hortense, and Lucky Pierre; that funny occupations include kamikaze, layman, and beggar; and that the funniest word in food is a Twinkie.

In Neil Simon's play "The Sunshine Boys," an old vaudevillian, Willie, says:

> "Alka Seltzer is funny. You say 'Alka Seltzer' and you get a laugh. . . . . Fifty-seven years I'm in this business, you learn a few things. . . . Words with a 'K' in it are funny. . . . Cupcake is funny. Tomato is *not* funny. . . . Casey Stengel, that's a funny name; Robert Taylor is not funny."

The power of "k" has become comedy lore. The book "Step by Step to Stand-Up Comedy," by Greg Dean, asserts, "Hard consonant sounds, especially *K* sounds, which include hard *C, Qu,* and, to a lesser extent, *T, P,* hard *G, D* and *B,* tend to make words sound funnier." The comic Wendy Liebman told me that she's always trying to write a joke that ends with "kayak." (Many ethnic slurs used in jokes are "k" words: "spic," "mick," "chink," "kike," and "Polack," for instance.)

Neil Simon is distressed that his monologue spawned such a hard-and-fast rule, believing that true comedy emerges from character. "Tricks like that

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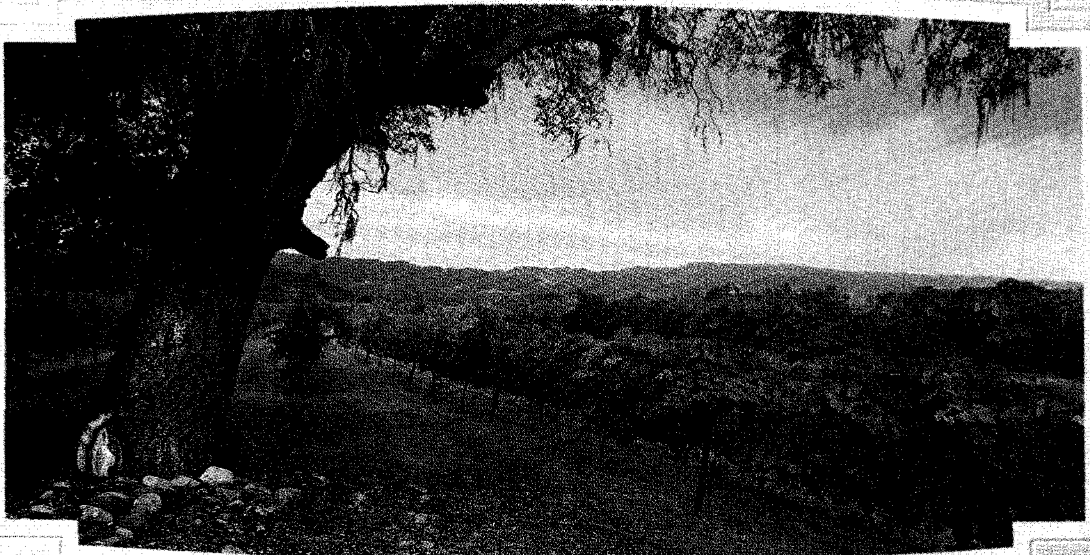

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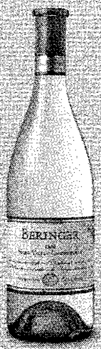

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are for beginners," he says. "It's like assessing a great football player by the way he laces up his shoes." When I visited Jon Stewart, the host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," in his office recently, he echoed Simon's complaint. "There isn't any insider's formula of 'sexual reference plus Jew plus "k-word" equals funny,' " he said.

"And, anyway, didn't Milton Berle die with all the comedy secrets?" Stewart's head writer, Ben Karlin, asked. He was referring to the late comedian's files, which contained more than six million jokes.

"Yes, but he didn't actually know them," Stewart said. "They were in a small metal chest in his cock." It's worth noting that that joke contains a sexual reference (Berle's legendarily large penis), a Jew (Berle), and a "k-word" punch line ("cock").

In 1991, Brent Forrester was working as an extra at Universal Studios, playing such roles as the hobo who is briefly seen warming his hands over a flaming trash can on the show "Quantum Leap." He decided that he would be happier as a highly paid television comedy writer. There was only one problem: he wasn't funny. So Forrester sat in his apartment in South Central Los Angeles and watched endless episodes of "The Simpsons," "Roseanne," and "Major Dad," writing down the routines that worked particularly well and identifying the "humor mechanisms" that underlay them. He determined that there were five. "The first is wordplay," says Forrester, a genial, sandy-haired man who went on to get a job writing for "The Simpsons" and to punch up such movie scripts as "Liar, Liar" and "Office Space." A common type of wordplay is "literalization": a character asks a rhetorical question like "What kind of idiot do you think I am?" and someone pipes up, "A big, fat idiot?"

"Wordplay alone is usually not funny," Forrester says. "It needs to be combined with another mechanism." Wordplay meets certain preconditions of humor: it is surprising, and it hinges on a soluble incongruity. But the problem with puns, riddles, malapropisms, spoonerisms, Wellerisms, and Tom Swifties is that once our brains complete a left-brain homonym match we grasp the trick of the joke. With a more complex joke that lights up the whole brain, you can't decipher how it works, or why it's funny. A pun is pure technique; to emotionally engage someone in a joke—to get a laugh—you also need a funny theme.

Fortunately, Forrester identified a number of those, too. "The second humor mechanism is comic irony," Forrester said. "For instance, attempting to plug the leak, you make a bigger hole. And it's funnier if you're pleased with your initial effort: 'Aha! I've plugged the leak!' The third is combining the sacred and the profane—the incongruous juxtaposition. A nun sits on the toilet, or a baby has a machine gun. The fourth is a reversal of scale—a little guy in a tiny VW drives into your feet.

"And the fifth," he continued, "is the unintentional revelation of something negative—trying to look classy, Homer lights his cigar with a discount coupon from a car wash. A lame joke has one mechanism: you see an old man with a Mohawk haircut. A brilliant joke always combines three mechanisms." In one "Simpsons" episode, the staff needed a gag for a sequence in which the murderous Sideshow Bob was chasing Bart. Forrester suggested that Bart duck into an office, praying, "Please, God, don't let him find me!" as he hid behind a water cooler, which magnified his head to twice its size. "That's a combination of comic irony and absurd reversal of scale, with the prayer thrown in to add the sacred/profane element," Forrester said. "I knew the joke couldn't fail!" (Somehow, it did: in the show's final version, another gag was used.)

Emboldened, Forrester began to blend temporal and physiological considerations into his Weltanschauung. When he worked on "King of the Hill," in the late nineties, he assembled a three-ring binder labelled "Writing Theory," which now sits on a shelf in the office of the show's co-creator, Greg Daniels. Using the backs

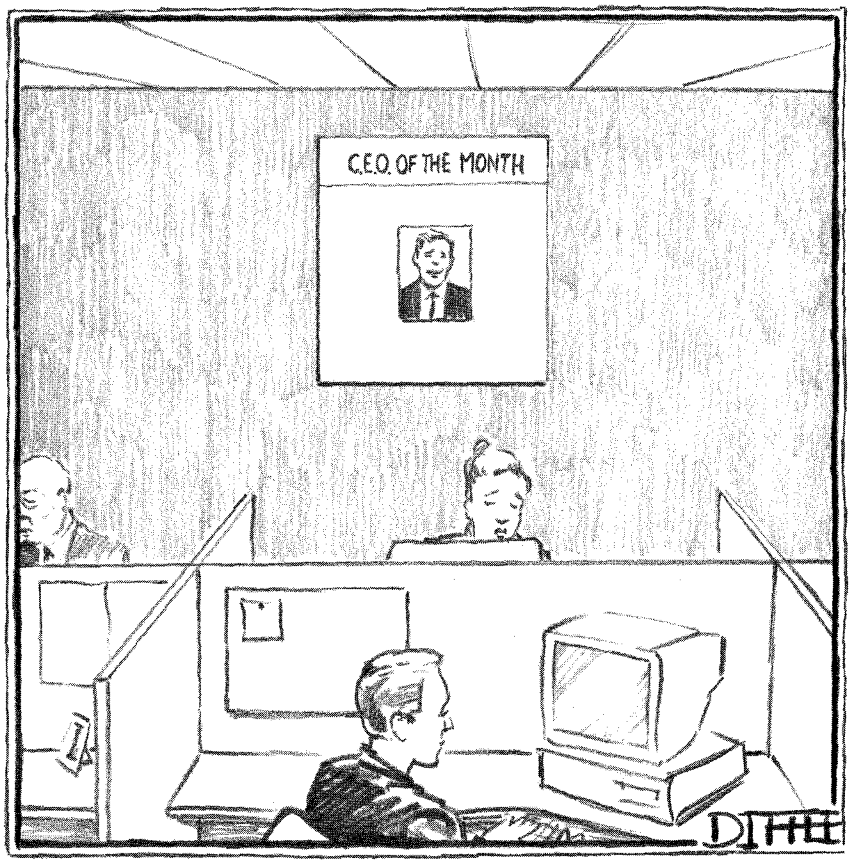
of discarded script pages, Forrester sketched out a "Humor & Duration Principle":

> J/T = F [where J is Joke, T is Time, and F is Funny; the less time you take to tell a joke, the funnier it is].

Daniels added "Steam Theory," which was illustrated by two boiling pots. One, uncovered, is releasing small "heh"s. The other, with a lid, gives off a single "HA!" "A lot of shows put jokes in every single line, and that dissipates," Daniels says. "Whereas if you tell only one big joke, and don't try to be funny en route, you can get a big laugh." He insists, "This has a physiological basis!" and adds, in a smaller voice, "Probably."

The show's other writers filled the book with theories of a less serious nature, including:

> J/PS varies inversely as BS/J [as Penis Size decreases, joke becomes funnier; as Boob Size increases, the same is true].
>
> If HN, then SV [if hit in the nuts, then squeaky voice].
>
> F Sound = Funny; F Smell = Not Funny [where F is Fart].
>
> Cream π/ Face = J^2



Such rules, which seem delightful at 2 A.M. in the writing room, would in most other contexts elicit bewilderment. W. F. Fry, Jr., and Gregory Bateson suggested that jokes work within a "play frame" denoted by a setup or a metacue, which announces, "I am going to relate something funny." Standard metacues include the raised eyebrow, the "Heard the one about?" preamble, and the clipped, article-dropping heightened style of speech ("Man walks into a bar. Bartender says . . ."). If, without a metacue, you told your physician, "If HN, then SV," he'd probably point out that most men who receive a blow to the testicles do not then speak in a high-pitched voice. Jokes also require the right audience. When I mentioned "If HN, then SV" to Jon Stewart, he laughed. Then he said, "But perform it in front of the castrati, and they get *very* angry."

When Richard Wiseman analyzed the LaughLab data, he was dismayed to discover that there was no correlation at all between his respondents' flexible-thinking skills and their nationalities or genders. His science-y hypothesis that Germans and women like simple jokes because their frontal lobes are relatively puny went nowhere, like a setup without a punch line.

His contest to determine the world's funniest joke was more satisfying. The Holmes-Watson-tent bit was finally overtaken by a joke submitted by a psychiatrist from Manchester, who often tells it to cheer up his patients. Fifty-seven per cent of LaughLab's voters rated it a 4 or a 5:

> A couple of New Jersey hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing, his eyes are rolled back in his head. The other guy whips out his cell phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps to the operator, "My friend is dead! What can I do?" The operator, in a calm soothing voice, says, "Just take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead." There is a silence, then a shot is heard. The guy's voice comes back on the line. He says, "O.K., now what?"

On October 3rd, Wiseman called a press conference in Covent Garden. One of his students, wearing a chicken suit, unveiled a poster with the joke written on it and stood beside it, making goofy, chickenlike gestures. Afterward, Wiseman told me that he was delighted with the winning entry, as it was so neatly explained by history's three favorite comedy theories. "We feel superior to the stupid hunter," he said. "We appreciate the incongruity of him misunderstanding the operator, and the joke also helps us to laugh about our concerns about our own mortality." The gratuitous inclusion of "New Jersey" was also, clearly, a shrewd play for the American vote, tapping social-identity scorn for the Garden State.

But any analysis of the joke remains unsatisfying. Seeking a thoroughgoing explanation for humor is like seeking the Fountain of Youth, or the Philosopher's Stone—it is a quest not for a tangible goal but for a beguiling idea. That idea, in this case, is to perfectly understand our illogical selves by understanding the most illogical thing that we do. What sometimes makes us giggle at funerals? Theories and brain maps abound, but no one really understands why we laugh when we do. ♦

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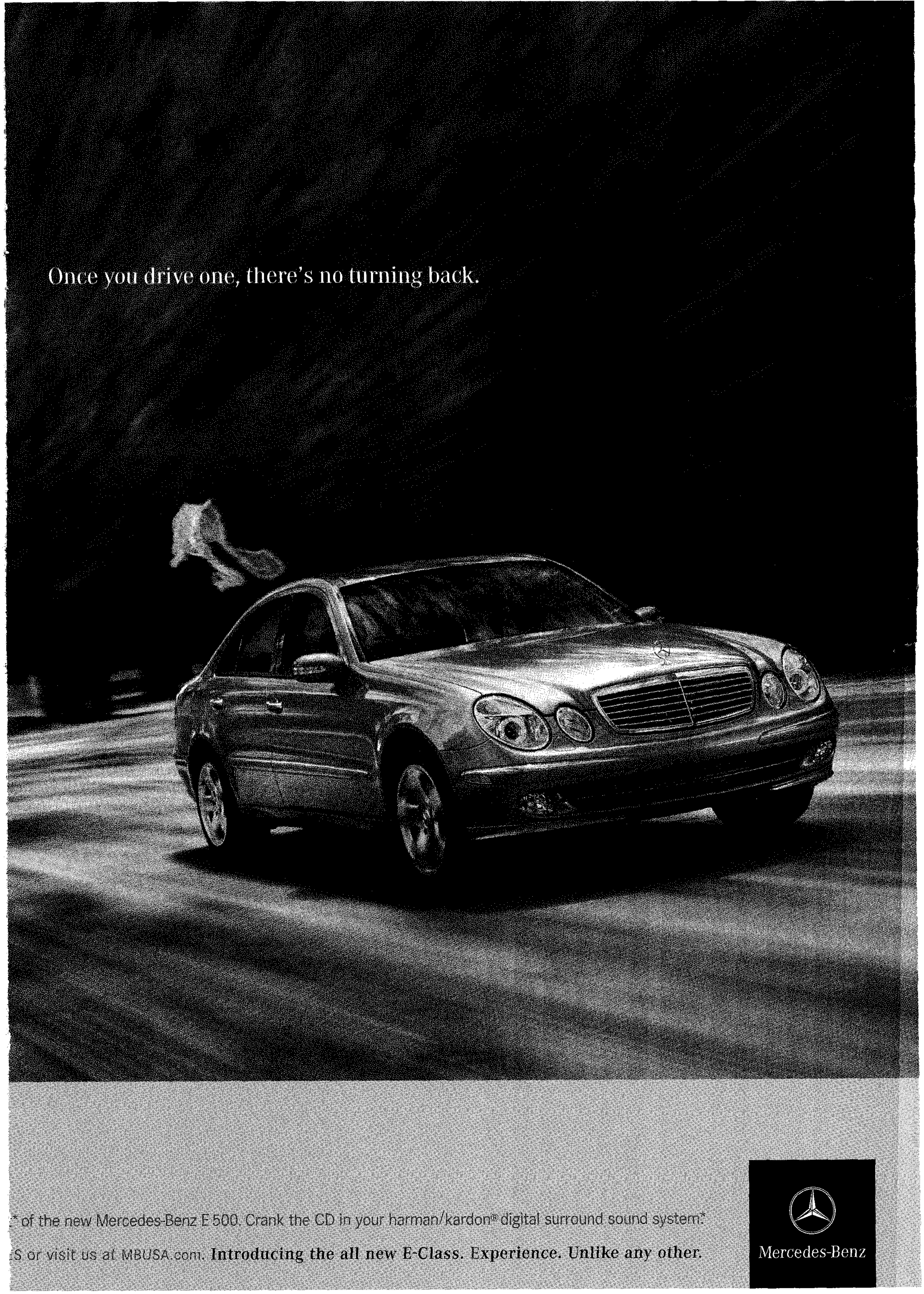

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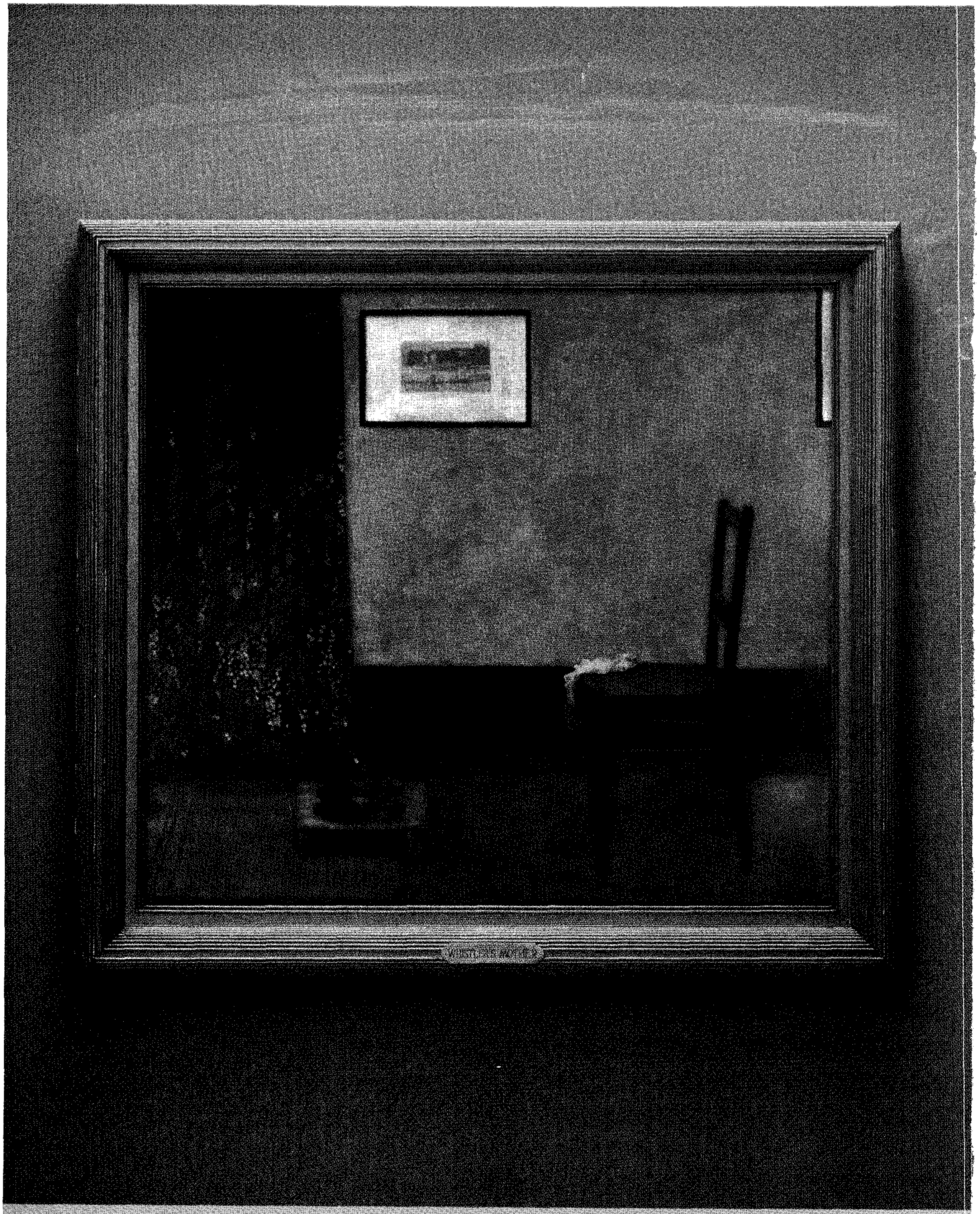

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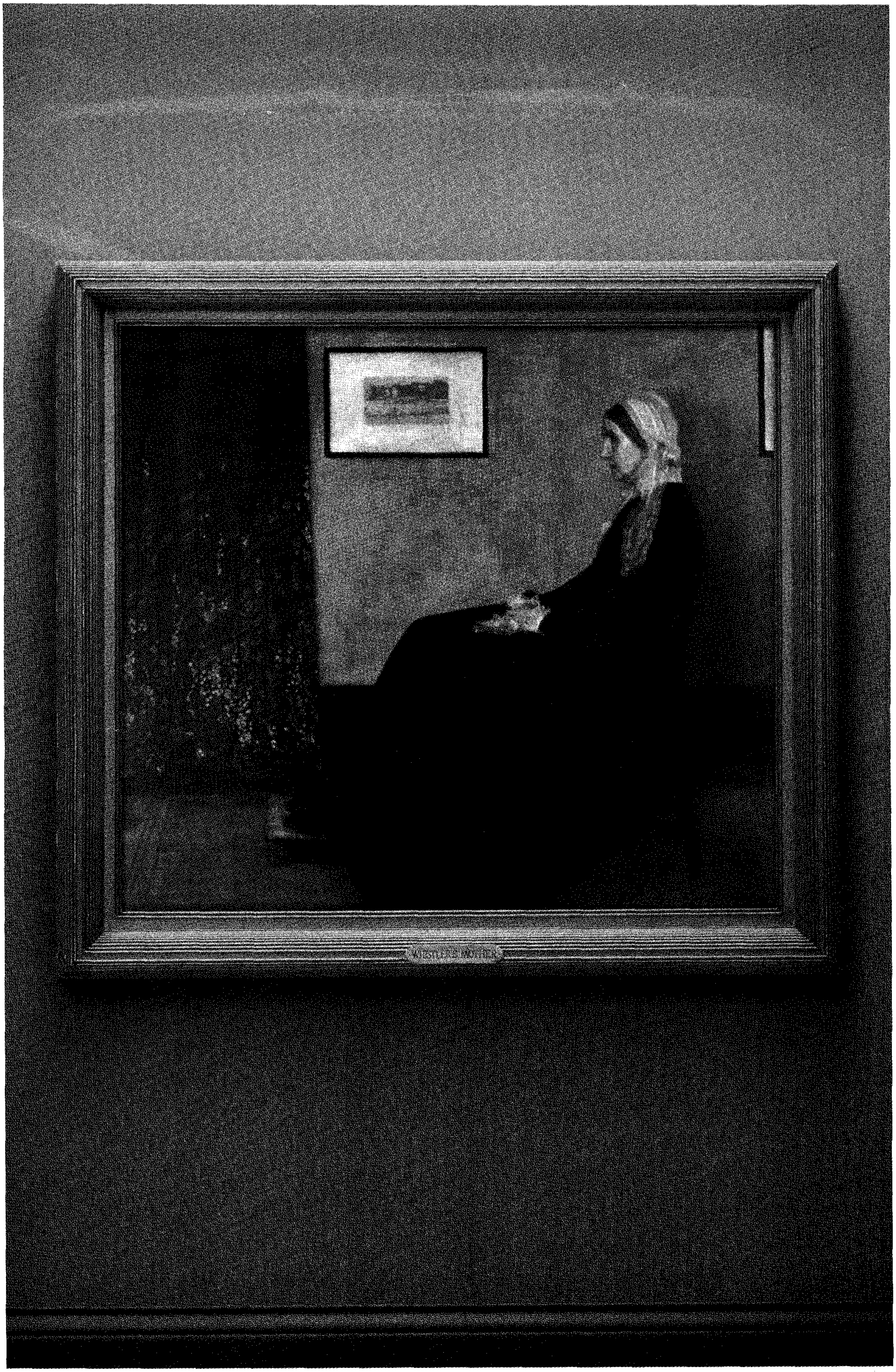

WHISTLER'S MOTHER

CASUAL

CAUTION, FALLING MOGULS

BY WOODY ALLEN

While perusing the *Times* movie ads in desperate search of some bearable celluloid high jinks with which to palliate a summer of heat and barometric readings one associates with August in Yoknapatawpha County, I had the interesting fortune to find a little oddment entitled "The Kid Stays in the Picture." This nostalgic documentary chronicled the rise of a young Prince Charming from a minor acting role as a matador to a taurine Hollywood studio head, laid low by the banderillas of blind ambition, marital heartbreak, and the untimely foreclosure by public servants of a commodious stash of nose candy. Emotionally shredded by this Euripidean tragedy, I eschewed sleep that night to mint a screenplay on the theme of hubris in Lotusland—a manuscript that promises to be an artistic and commercial event unexperienced since "Howard the Duck." Some scenes follow.

Fade in on a papaya stand on Manhattan's West Side. Dispensing franks and coconut milk is a hangdog pilgrim in his fifties whose prematurely aging visage speaks eloquently of suffering at fate's mercurial whims. He is Mike Umlaut, who muses to himself ruefully while drawing a piña colada as his boss, Mr. Ectopic, looks on.

UMLAUT: Saints preserve me. That I, Mike Umlaut, once resplendent C.E.O. of a dream factory, vacuuming profits like a slot machine, am reduced to doling out tropical beverages as a means of keeping my stove warm.

ECTOPIC: Let's move it, Umlaut. There's a customer bellowing for a corn dog.

UMLAUT: Right away, sir. Just slicing a papaya in such wise as to retain its healthful vitamin content. (*To himself, as he fetches a corn dog for an insistent eight-year-old*) Ironic that I who began my career trafficking in victuals should end up in similar fashion.

(*Camera shakes as we dissolve back to Umlaut's first job as caterer on the set of "Where Beavers Fear to Tread," a studio epic shot at a lot close to Paramount. We dolly in to the craft-service table, where we discover Harry Eppis, the producer, pondering the assorted pick-me-ups.*)

EPPIS (*to Moribund, his yes-man*): What to do? Here I am, two years over schedule on an eight-week shoot, and my lead actor, Roy Reflux, gets busted for frottage at the Gap. Is it a wonder my ulcer's the size of a flapjack? You there, wretched caterer: black coffee and a cinnamon Danish.

MORIBUND: You'll have to shoot around him, H.E. At least till his parole. It'll add copious zeroes to our budget, but you knew Reflux was a handful when you inked his pact.

UMLAUT: Excuse me, sir, for daring to speak, but I couldn't help overhearing your little dumka. Why not just write his role out?

EPPIS: What? Who said that? Do my cochleas deceive me, or was it the lowly purveyor of buns?

UMLAUT: Think of it, sir. His character, though amusing, is not pivotal. A few lashes laid to the writer's back and he could emend the scenario with sufficient cunning as to manumit you forever from Reflux, that pot of kasha, whom you're vastly overpaying, if *Variety's* any judge.

EPPIS: I'll bet he's right. This below-the-line inchworm has just brushed a veil from before my peepers. You've a quick noggin, you rascal—and obviously it extends beyond *schnecken*.

UMLAUT: By the way, I wouldn't have black coffee and cinnamon Danish if you have an ulcer. The one is sodden with caffeine, the other sports too savory a spice. Why not let me coddle you a more user-friendly tandem of *œufs*.

EPPIS: Is there no end to this Renaissance man's vision? There's a place for a noodle such as yours in the front office. Henceforth you will be in charge of all pictures made at Bubonic Studios.

(*Dissolve to a movie première at Grauman's Chinese Theatre. The words "One Year Later" are supered over the glittering throng that engorges the lobby. An admixture of moguls and superstars exchange insincerities with agents, directors, and ravishing young wanna-bes. The camera travels down the chandelier, à la Hitchcock, to a closeup of Mike Umlaut's trembling hands as he converses, sotto voce, with his newly acquired agent, Jasper Nutmeat.*)

NUTMEAT: Take it easy, kid. I've never seen you so wired.

UMLAUT: Wouldn't you be, Nutmeat? My first picture as producer. If "Behold a Pale Endocrinologist" doesn't make it, I'm finished. Fifty million simoleons suctioned from studio coffers and deposited in perpetuity with Thomas Crapper.

NUTMEAT: You gotta go with your instinct, kid. Your gut told you America's ready for a picture about the smelting process.

UMLAUT: I've only staked my future on it. But what am I to do, Nutmeat? I'm a dreamer.

(*A velvety voice punctuates Umlaut's reverie.*)

PAULA: And I'd like a chance to make your dreams come true.

(*Umlaut snaps around and we cut to a blond apparition in her early twenties, clearly descended from Olympus by way of Hugh Hefner's mansion.*)

UMLAUT: Wha? Who are you, you fortuitous agglomeration of protoplasm?

PAULA: Paula Pessary. I'm only a starlet now but with a teensy break I could lay siege to the hearts of a truly solid demographic.

UMLAUT: And I'll see to it you get the at-bat so coveted.

PAULA (*stroking his cheek*): I promise you, I'm well trained in the art of gratitude.

(*The bow tie of Umlaut's tuxedo begins spinning like a propeller.*)

UMLAUT: I mean to marry you and make you the brightest star in the firmament, and I'm including Canis Major, the dog one.

PAULA: Mike Umlaut marry? Everyone knows that as Tinseltown's budding Thalberg you're glimpsed nightly at sundry boîtes always squiring a fresh mouse.

UMLAUT: Till tonight. Tonight, the earth shook.

NUTMEAT (*running over*): The reviews are in. The movie's a smash. You'll never have to return another phone call!

(*Cut to exterior shot of Bubonic Studios. Cut inside to reveal the new head honcho,* *Mike Umlaut. He sits in his office, where the walls are dotted with Warhols and Stellas, plus an occasional Fra Angelico to limn the breadth of his taste. Surrounding him are flunkies and myrmidons aplenty. Nutmeat, now a vice-president, is present, plus Arvide Mite and Tobias Gelding, two ubiquitous studio dealmakers. Dolly in for two-shot of Umlaut barking orders to his harried secretary, Miss Onus.*)

UMLAUT: Get me Wolfram Ficus on the phone and tell him I'm sending him a copy of "Such Foolish Chickens." Tell him to read the part of Yount the apothecary. And ready my private Gulfstream: there's a sneak preview of "The Reluctant Embalmer" in Seattle. Have the plane taxi down Rodeo Drive and pick me up in front of Spago after lunch.

GELDING: M.U., the weekend figures are in. "Gerbils and Gypsies" has broken every record at the Music Hall.

MITE: As has "The Learning Disabled Toreador." Everything you touch goes platinum.

UMLAUT: Say, boys, have any of you read Gilgamesh?

(*They assent enthusiastically.*)

NUTMEAT: The Babylonian Bible? Sure, several times, why?

UMLAUT: I'm going to say one word to you: Musical.

NUTMEAT (*reverentially*): Only you. Only you . . .

(*Paula Pessary, now Mrs. Umlaut, enters in a tight Versace dress that breads her voluptuous contours like matzo meal on a cutlet.*)

PAULA: The advance notices of "Reverse Peristalsis" are in. They're calling me this generation's Garbo and you the brooding Svengali who pulls the strings.

(*Umlaut produces a tiara from his pocket and lays it on her. They kiss.*)

GELDING: Isn't love something? Clock this golden couple. While flood and famine cloak so much of the blue marble, these two coast through, buttressed only by devotion and high grosses.

(*Dissolve to the set of a film on location in Coonabarabran. The director, Lippo Sheigitz, is raging at Umlaut.*)

SHEIGITZ: You crass philistine! This was supposed to be my picture! I was to have total artistic control!

UMLAUT: What's a few line changes?

SHEIGITZ: Line changes? The blind concert violinist is now a Navy SEAL?

UMLAUT: It gives more oomph. Look, Sheigitz, you know that I'm not one of those passive suits who just busy themselves with arithmetic. I'm a creative, hands-on guy. By the way, forget Mozart, I've decided it's going to be a rock score. I've hired the group Epicac to handle the music.

SHEIGITZ (*attacking Umlaut with a prop hoe*): I'll dismember you, you hamfisted meddler!

(*Guards rush in and remove Sheigitz.*)

NUTMEAT: Not to worry, M.U. He'll be replaced *toot sweet* by a more malleable weaver of dreams. Town's full of 'em. Say—why the ductile puss? Don't let that ersatz auteur put you uptight.

UMLAUT: It's not that. It's Paula, my wife.

NUTMEAT: Uh-oh, what gives, M.U.?

UMLAUT: She's been having an affair with her co-star, Agamemnon Wurst. And who can blame her? Workaholic that I am, I turned a blind eye when she went off to make a film on location in Paris with the No. 1 box-office attraction in America. The film wrapped two years ago and they're still on location. It doesn't take much to put the pieces together.

NUTMEAT: That gonzo? You could ruin him in the business with one phone call.

UMLAUT: No, I prefer the high road. I wished them Godspeed. Funny, we once vowed eternal love—now she won't tell me where she hid the car keys.

(*Cut to chopper landing, and an excited Arvide Mite runs at Umlaut.*)

MITE: What figures—what gorgeous numerals. The remake of "Love Tsimmes" is a monster hit. M.U., you could film the L.A. phone directory and make it into a bonanza.

NUTMEAT: You've got a wild look in your eyes, M.U. I've never discerned it before. Add a crooked Jekyll-and-Hyde smile. I pray you're not about to overreach.

(*Musical sting. Dissolve to six months later. Umlaut's Holmby Hills estate. Here, as in his office, the walls are littered with Rauschenbergs and Johnses, with a casual sprinkling of Vermeers to leaven the modernity. Nutmeat is consoling Umlaut as a half-dozen impassive furniture movers are removing paintings and repossessing everything he owns.*)

NUTMEAT: Did I say take it easy? Did I not lecture myself blue in the punim on overweening ambition, using as a for-instance Icarus?

UMLAUT: Yes, but—

NUTMEAT: What but? Arvide Mite was only waxing hyperbolic when he said you could make the phone book into a hit. Only an idiot or a megalomaniac would have accepted the challenge. Especially the Yellow Pages.

UMLAUT: What did I do?

NUTMEAT: What you've done is taken a record budget of two hundred million iron men and fabricated a concrete latke that opened to bupkis. I guess you can't blame the board of directors of Amalgamated Sushi for ousting you. That Japanese conglomerate's going to have to sell a lot of yellowtail to break even.

(*As the last of Umlaut's furniture is toted off, he is picked up bodily by local marshals and heaved into the service alley while a family of Bedouins drop anchor on the property. We dissolve back to the present, to find Umlaut scurrying to fill an order of Orange Nectars for six impatient hardhats. A car pulls up to the curb and Umlaut's lawyer, Nestor Weakfish, emerges, waving a document.*)

WEAKFISH: Umlaut! Umlaut, your faithful Solon bears news.

UMLAUT: If it's about the retainer, I'm tapped.

WEAKFISH: Stop blathering. All is roses. Our claim against Amalgamated Sushi took years, but we've won it.

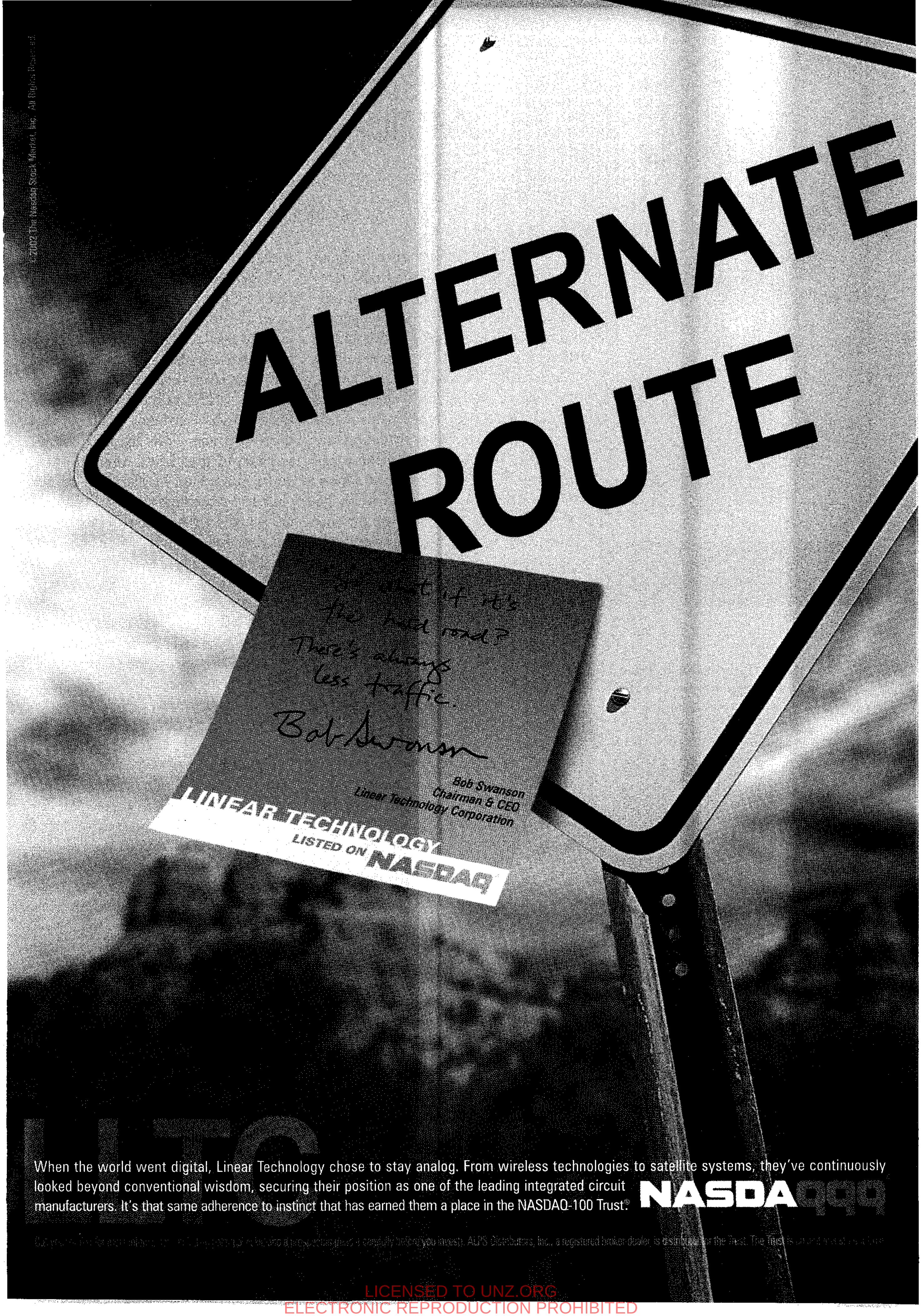
UMLAUT: You mean, the studio's no longer contesting my golden-parachute clause?

WEAKFISH: You got it. Under your deal, the termination of your contract sluices them to the tune of six hundred million clams. My boy, you've been made whole!

UMLAUT (*tearing off his apron*): I'm rich! Six hundred million! I can buy this whole papaya chain and fire Mr. Ectopic. I can buy my house back, my airplane, my Vermeers!

WEAKFISH: Hey, wait a minute—we beat a Sushi conglomerate. I said six hundred million clams—we're talking bivalves here.

(*Weakfish gestures outside as a refrigerated truck starts unloading Umlaut's settlement. As Umlaut turns on Weakfish with a shucking knife, the camera pulls back and rises on a crane to view it all from on high, paying homage to the shot of the wounded Confederacy in "Gone with the Wind," while we fade to black.*) ♦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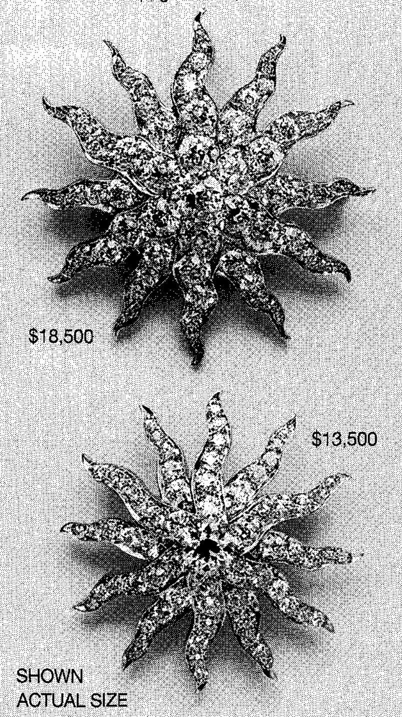

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THE SPORTING SCENE

ATTILA'S HEADSET

Can Steve Spurrier's ballplays work in the pros?

BY MARK BOWDEN

In his début performance as head coach of the Washington Redskins—a home victory over the Arizona Cardinals on September 8th—Steve Spurrier was among the injured. It was hardly surprising, given his flea-on-a-griddle exertions on the sidelines. He paced, he fidgeted, he shouted, he pleaded, he writhed, he leaped, he threw his handwritten laminated play sheets on the ground in anger or waved them impatiently to demand someone's attention. When his offense left the field, he dropped to one knee and bore into his play sheets, scratching his head and grimacing, and when the offense took the field again he was back in motion, leaning into passes and kicks as if he'd launched the ball himself. Sometimes, in a game, he will peer up at his assistant coaches in their boxes high in the mezzanine and throw his arms open wide, as if to say, "Help me out here, will ya!" He is a virtuoso of facial expression, with features that twist, flex, bend, stretch, slacken, and knot like putty, reflecting every nuance of mood during a game. In the opener, a bulky headset sat astride his sun visor, a trademark accessory that he had flung from his head many times during twelve seasons with the University of Florida Gators. He fiddled with the headset constantly. When one of his successful plays was nullified by a holding penalty, Spurrier tore it off and sliced his middle finger.

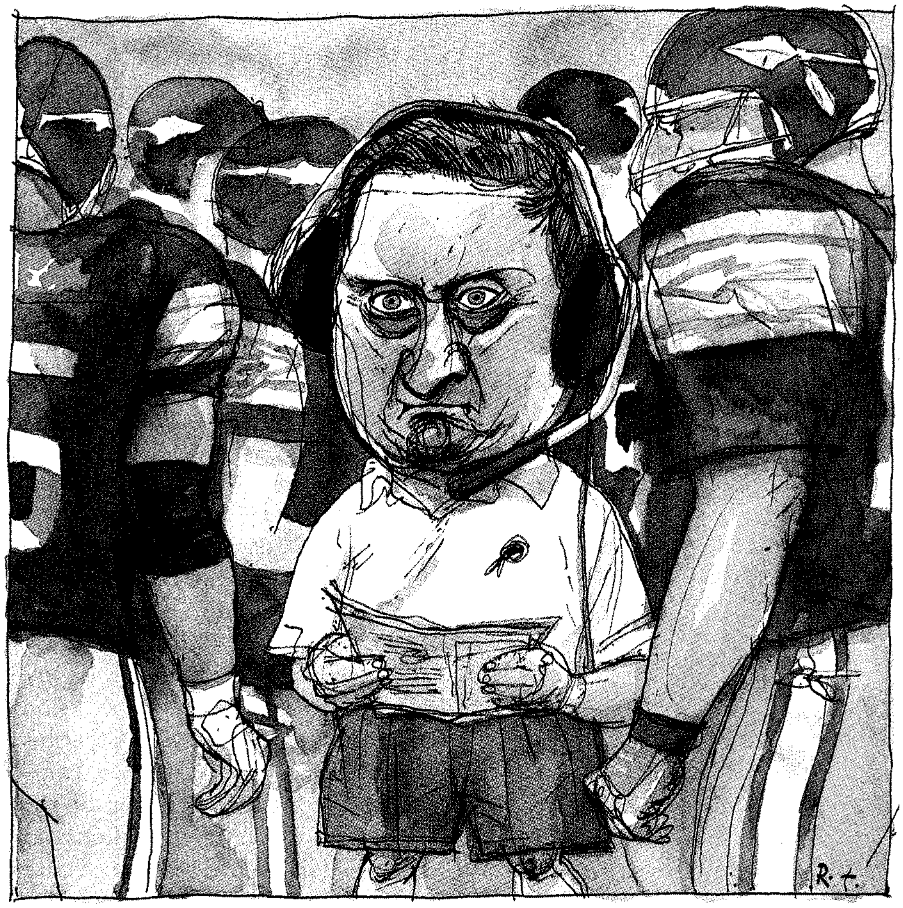
"The earphones had that little sponge padding on them and the edge went right through it—cut me pretty good," he said after the game, displaying the bandaged finger to a room crowded with reporters and cameras.

In addition to the usual pack of Washington sportswriters, a number of scruffy writers from the Florida swamplands had shown up to see how their ol' Gator "ballcoach" would fare in the big leagues. He did well this first time out, putting up thirty-one points (to Arizona's twenty-three), dispelling predictions that his "collegiate system" would collapse in the face of a genuine pro defense. Spurrier faced the room with cheerful resignation, his usual pose in the spotlight. He is a lean, loose-limbed man with a mop of chestnut-colored hair and a quarterback's physique. (He retired from the field twenty-five years ago, when he was thirty-two, and shows hardly a wrinkle or patch of gray hair.) After spending hours in the sun, his face was burned pink up to a distinct curving line under his eyes; above that, where the shadow of the visor had fallen, the skin was pale. His hair was tousled and matted with sweat, and his black cotton shirt—he has not worn the Redskins' team colors, burgundy and gold, presumably because they resemble too closely the colors of his old rival F.S.U. (Florida State University)—hung limp on his sloping shoulders. He looked pleased and weary, as if he had just finished playing in the game himself.

In Washington, a city that straddles North and South, Spurrier's down-home style has tilted the axis Dixie-ward. For many years, the Redskins were the capital's only big sports franchise, and pro football is followed there with a passion that unites its widely disparate social classes like nothing else. Fans now speak of their "ballcoach," and the "ballplays" with which he plans to "pitch and catch" the Skins back to the Super Bowl. "SPURRIER DAZZLES IN DEBUT" was the headline on the Washington *Post* columnist Thomas Boswell's account of the Arizona Cardinals game.

Spurrier built his career in a league that is made of raw talent and youthful exuberance. He says that there are only two ways to be successful. One is to work harder than everyone else; the other is to do things differently. He long ago chose the second path, refusing to work long hours. When practice breaks, he often runs on a treadmill and lifts weights for about an hour, and then he drives home.

"He's the opposite of a workaholic," his wife, Jerri, says. "He doesn't overwork himself emotionally, mentally, or physically, and he doesn't want those working for him to, either. If he sees them working late, he'll kick them out. Some of them sneak back, but, eventually, when you work with Steve you get into that mode. You don't have to grind, not in anything."

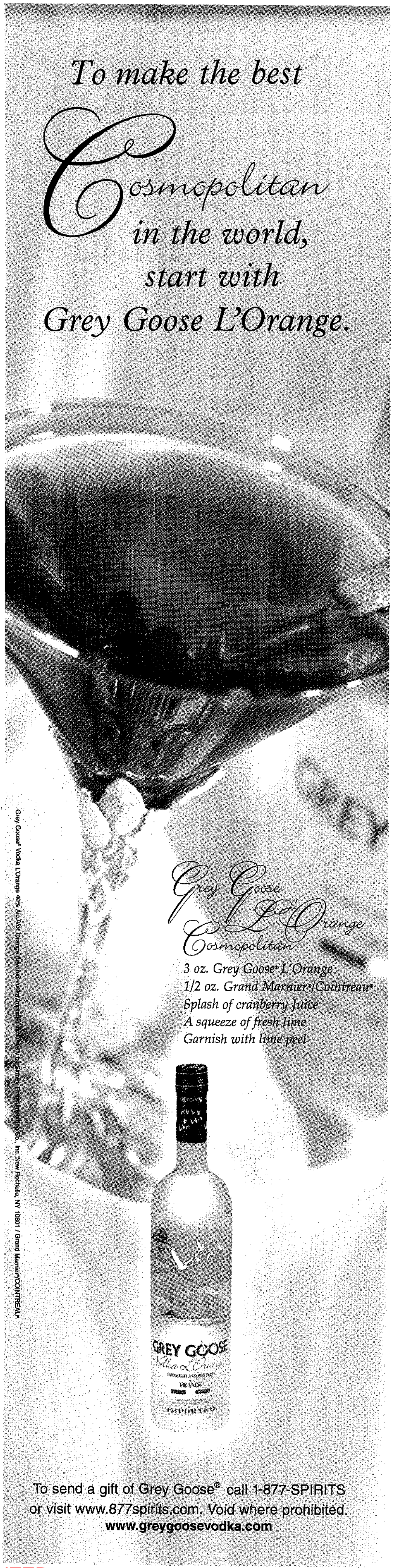


Coaching "seemed like fun," Spurrier says. "I'm not very good at working."

RICHARD THOMPSON

Normally, college coaches who reach the N.F.L. spend years as relatively low-paid, overworked assistants. Pro coaches like to think they play a more sophisticated brand of football, so Spurrier's sudden ascent was seen as an insult, and there has been some grumbling about the folly of bringing a collegiate system to the pros. The hard feelings were aggravated by Spurrier's salary. Under the five-year contract he signed with the Redskins' pugnacious young owner, Dan Snyder, he will earn almost five million dollars a season—making him one of the highest-paid coaches in N.F.L. history. Also, Spurrier is what even Jerri calls "a brat." His zeal for winning extends well beyond the football field. His family avoids playing games with him. On the golf course he insists that his partners keep strict count of their strokes, and is known to needle them at the tee. In speeches and at press conferences, he sometimes teases or belittles his opponents. When he's ahead, he tends to run up the score. He ridicules other coaches' punishing work habits, tangles spiritedly with reporters, and has an unassailable confidence in his own eventual success—which, judging by his season so far, he will need.

After the opening win, the Redskins lost four of their next five games. It wasn't surprising. It usually takes a head coach at least two years to rebuild a team in his own image. Spurrier has been successful wherever he has coached—at Florida, where he took over as head coach in 1990, he compiled a record-setting hundred and twenty-two wins (to just twenty-seven losses and one tie), won seven Southeastern Conference championships, and cap-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tured the national championship in 1996 by defeating his rival F.S.U.—so his owner and his fans are likely to be patient with him. If he does well, and many expect he will, he may change the definition of the job. "Steve Spurrier is the future," Snyder told me. "I believe he will be very influential in the N.F.L., just as he has been in college ball."

Forty years ago, the prototype for a football coach was Vince (St. Vince) Lombardi, the avuncular head of the Green Bay Packers. He was blunt and unassuming, intensely competitive, and unfailingly sportsmanlike, and he experienced victory only vicariously. Lombardi's ethos of humility began to erode in the nineteen-seventies, when personalities like Don Shula, with the Miami Dolphins, and Tom Landry, with the Dallas Cowboys, assumed C.E.O.-like status in the increasingly corporate N.F.L. As the value of its franchises surged with television profits, and as the price for season tickets approached that of a small car, the teams' front offices tripled or quadrupled in size and their coaching staffs expanded and specialized. Teams moved from cramped, dirty locker rooms in the basements of drafty stadiums to state-of-the-art, multimillion-dollar campuses, with sprawling air-conditioned offices, three or four training fields (each with a different style of turf), and NASA-style weight rooms and physical-therapy facilities. The head coach became a paragon of corporate leadership and public-relations savvy, working eighteen-hour days and seeking to control aspects of the team that had traditionally been the owner's prerogatives—scouting and drafting players, negotiating contracts, managing the team's salary cap. The mark of true status in today's N.F.L. is not just to be head coach but to run the whole show, to be general manager or president of football operations. Such ambitions sometimes get coaches in trouble. Marty Schottenheimer, Spurrier's predecessor in Washington, was fired because, Snyder said, he wanted "power I wasn't willing to give up." Schottenheimer now coaches in San Diego.

Spurrier wants less responsibility, not more. He shuns many of the traditional roles: he doesn't mentor his players or get overinvolved in scouting and recruiting talent. He has little or nothing to do with its defense—for that, Snyder hired Marvin Lewis away from the Baltimore Ravens. The result so far has been disastrous—the Redskins defense has given up more points than all but a handful of teams. Spurrier delegates to assistants responsibility for coaching blockers, tacklers, kickers, and receivers, whom he calls "catchers." He works primarily with his quarterbacks, his "pitchers."

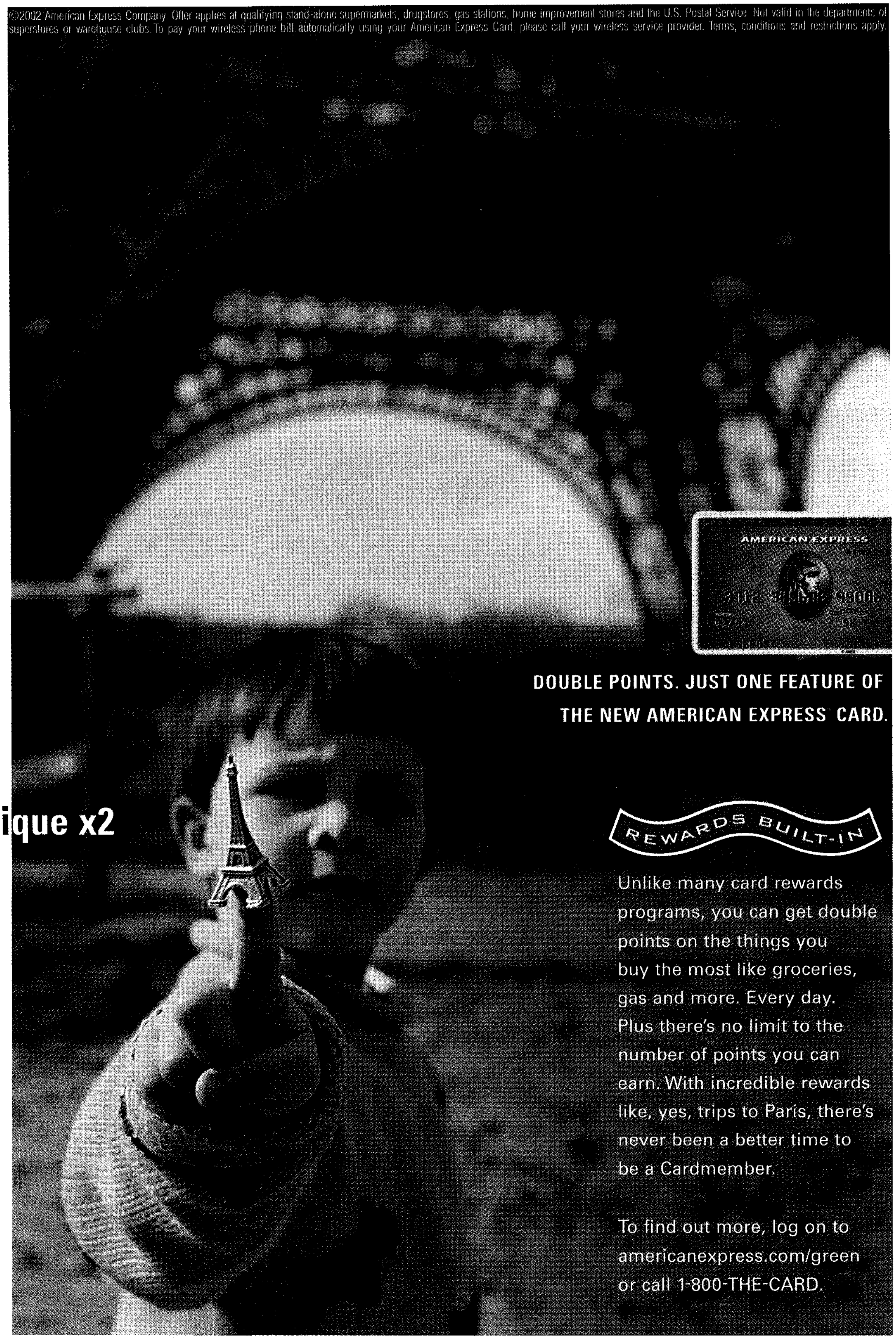
And for that the N.F.L. affords him a tool he never had in all his years of winning at the University of Florida. Eight seasons ago, the league decided to allow head coaches to talk by one-way radio directly to quarterbacks on the field between plays. Once the ball is officially replaced on the field after a play, the offense has forty seconds to plan before the next snap. For the first twenty-five of those seconds, the coach is allowed to talk to his quarterback, who has a transmitter in his helmet. It's as close as Spurrier will ever get to being back on the field.

In his début game against the Cardinals, Spurrier rode the transmission button on his radio so heavily that his quarterback, Shane Matthews, complained afterward that on top of the general din of eighty-five thousand screaming fans he had to contend with the coach's breathing, sideline conversations, and the relooped roar of the crowd piped into his helmet. Matthews was voted offensive Player of the Week in the National Football Conference for his performance. At that moment, the future looked bright for both the new coach and the quarterback. Matthews encountered Spurrier in a hallway underneath the field after the game, held out his hand, and congratulated his coach.

"Some of it was you, some of it was me," Spurrier told him. "We'll sort it out when we look at the film."

Long after the rest of the team headed for the showers on the sunny campus of Redskins Park, in Ashburn, Virginia, this September, Spurrier stayed on the field with his three quarterbacks, Danny Wuerffel,

"Well, I like it. I'm sorry your book group doesn't."



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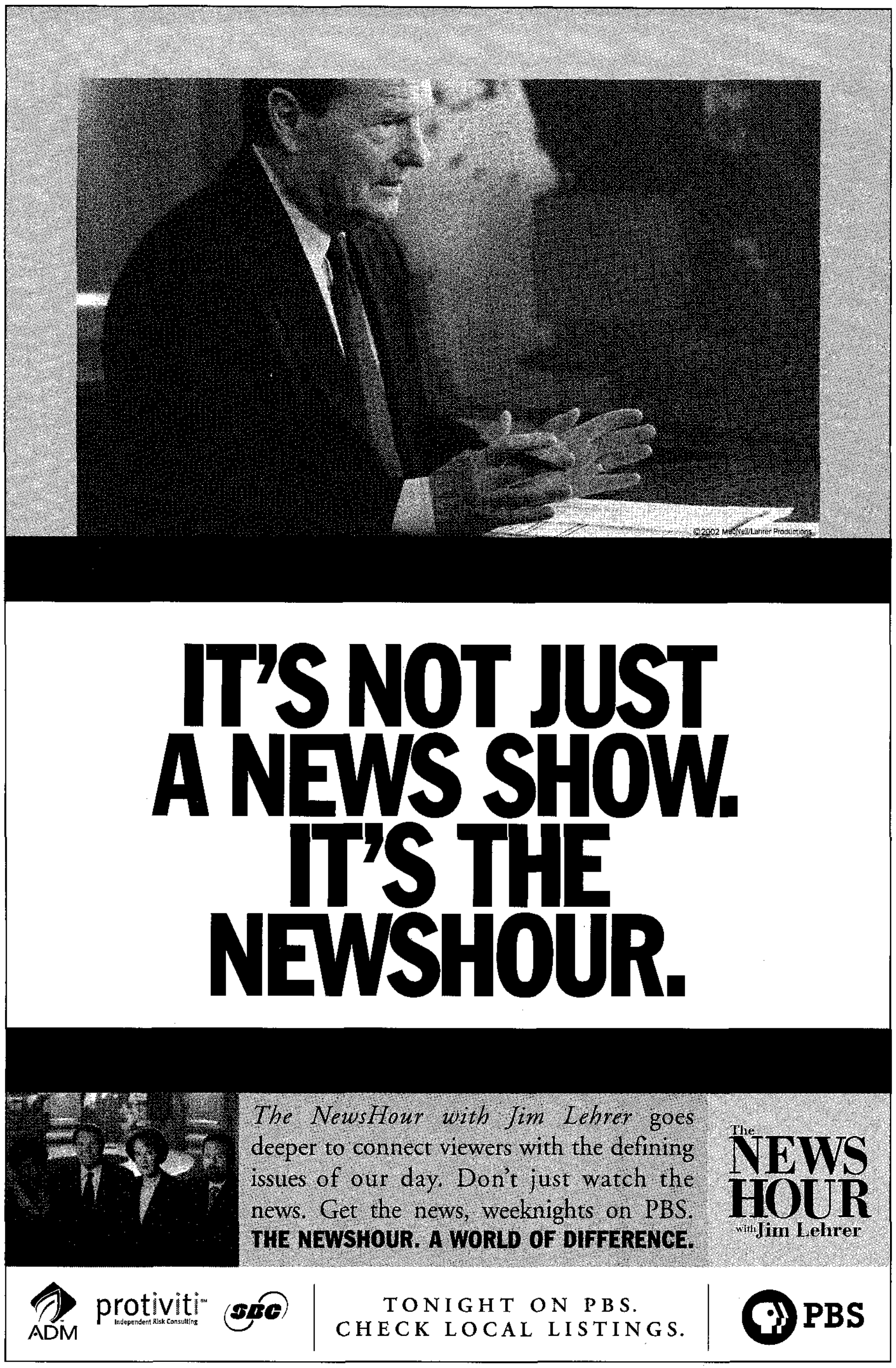
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Shane Matthews, and the rookie Patrick Ramsey. Wearing shorts and a white polo shirt with the collar turned up, Spurrier took snaps from center and, moving in slow motion, demonstrated again and again the proper execution of the three-step drop: head level, eyes downfield, ball poised under his right ear, arm cocked for a quick release. He was working with young men who have been playing quarterback—in high school, college, and the pros—for years, and still no detail of the mechanics was too minor for Spurrier's further instruction.

When he finished, he jogged off the field with the careful, slightly mincing steps of a middle-aged athlete whose knees are tender. He greeted the assembled local reporters who monitor the team daily—"Boys and girls, are you still here? I was trying to outlast you. I don't want y'all to write that we stayed out here and practiced."

A few minutes later, I followed him into the air-conditioned Redskins building, where he has a big office with windows that look out over the practice fields. Framed photographs of Spurrier romping with his various championship teams—sweaty, bloodied, and gleeful, in the heady glory of victory—fill one wall. Another group of pictures features his family: Jerri and their four children and seven grandchildren, including a set of triplet boys. The desk was piled with paperwork. At one end was a well-thumbed, highlighted, underlined copy of "The Art of War," by Sun Tzu, and on top of it the Wess Roberts best-seller, "Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun." He picked it up.

"I gave Dan Snyder this book," he said. "There's some good advice in there, the way Attila there used to treat his Huns, or the generals under him. It's the same thing, Attila and his Huns, me and my players. There was one story in there. Attila lanced the boil on one of his soldiers and sucked out the pus and blood himself, and spit it away. The soldier's mother cried when she heard the story. She was asked why it made her cry, and she said because Attila had done the same thing for her husband, the boy's father, and afterward he had been so loyal he'd marched gladly off to his death in the front ranks of Attila's armies. 'Now my son will do the same,' she said."

Spurrier is less likely to find this kind of selfless player in the pros than at the college level. N.F.L. locker rooms are filled with cynical, hard-bitten athletes, most of whom have already tasted a measure of glory elsewhere, some of whom are in the game solely for the money, and some of whom know that their worth to the team—and their paycheck—easily outweighs the coach's.

Spurrier compiles and memorizes lists of coaching maxims. There are thirty on his "Guidelines for a Good Ball Coach." No. 1 reads: "Treat all players fairly; the way they deserve to be treated." No. 18: "Make the game fun for your players." No. 20: "Don't ever use foul language in front of your players." But Spurrier's magic lies not primarily in planning and motivating—the traditional skills of the head coach—or even in devising the complex plays in his thick book, which sportswriters consider the key to his success. His talent is for calling plays. Among the thirty-two head coaches in the pros, he is unusual in having been a celebrated football player himself. He has a gift for thinking on his feet, for understanding game situations and reading defensive formations. In the seconds between plays, he chooses from the subtle variations in his playbook or invents minor adjustments on the spot in order to surprise and snare his opponent.

For most coaches, victory is something carefully plotted in the film room, where the game's mysteries are dissected. Unless you have the luxury of studying game film, slowing it down and isolating different portions of the field, and you know exactly what was supposed to happen on a given play, you can't know for certain why most plays succeed or fail. The coach's painstaking strategies for the next game are kept deliberately obscure. They are printed out by computer in long coded patterns on the laminated play cards that the coaches take to the sidelines. Spurrier is more improvisational. His handwritten play cards look like something he threw together over breakfast. His offensive style has been called the "Fun 'n' Gun," because he disdains the slow, laborious methods that many N.F.L. coaches consider basic to success in the pros. The traditional road to victory in football is to wear your opponents down. Spurrier prefers to fool them.

"Some people use tricks more often than others, and some people do it better than others," Bobby Bowden, Spurrier's rival coach at F.S.U., said. "He will do anything to move the ball forward, and he'll sometimes come up with things that make you ask, 'Where'd he get that thing?' or 'How'd he think that one up?' Especially in the passing game. It wasn't so much that he came up with plays or formations I hadn't seen before—it was his timing. Timing and execution. His timing was so good that unless you were really on your toes and at the top of your game he was going to get you."

Steven Orr Spurrier was born in Florida in 1945 to Marjorie and John Graham Spurrier. He was the youngest of three children. His father, a Presbyterian minister, took sports nearly as seriously as he took God. He coached his two sons in Little League, where he was known to lecture on the old saw about winning being less important than how you play the game. The point of playing the game, he informed his players (and his sons absorbed the lesson), was to win.

In basketball, Spurrier averaged almost two-thirds of the points scored by his high-school team, led them to their local championship twice, and was selected to the All-State team in 1963, his senior year. That same year, he also played shortstop and pitched his team to a second state baseball championship, an accomplishment that Spurrier says is "the most fun I ever had as a player in any sport." As quarterback, he gave his football team a comeback victory in their final game—the Exchange Bowl—overcoming a 21–0 halftime deficit with four touchdown passes. He was famous for drawing up plays in the huddle, a skill that his coaches at first didn't appreciate. Ken Lyon, one of his old teammates, told two reporters who were writing a story about Spurrier for the Lakeland (Florida) *Ledger* that Spurrier got in trouble once at practice for fiddling with a play:

> One of our coaches, Snake Evans, called everything to a halt and asked him, "What was that?" Steve said he thought it would be better if we did it this way. Coach Evans said, "You know, we've got a problem here. I

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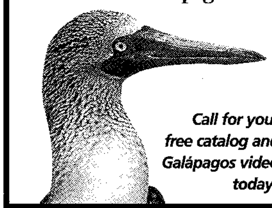

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thought I was the coach. Do you agree with me that I'm the coach? Well, if you can agree to that, then go back and run it my way. Otherwise, go get you a shower."

THE DOE

Near dusk, near a path, near a brook,
we stopped, I in disquiet and dismay
for the suffering of someone I loved,
the doe in her always incipient terror.

All that moved was her pivoting ear
the reddening sun shining through
transformed to a color I'd only seen
in a photo of a new child in a womb.

Nothing else stirred, not a leaf,
not the air, but she startled and bolted
away from me into the crackling brush.

The part of my pain which sometimes
releases me from it fled with her, the rest,
in the rake of the late light, stayed.

—*C. K. Williams*

When Spurrier did the same thing in a game, however, and scored a touchdown, no one complained.

"He'd just draw it out on the ground," another teammate said.

Spurrier's high-school success led him to the University of Florida, where, after three years of quarterbacking for the Gators, he won the Heisman Trophy. In Gainesville, they called him by his initials, S.O.S., because he led the team to so many come-from-behind victories in the fourth quarter. His other nickname was Steve Superior.

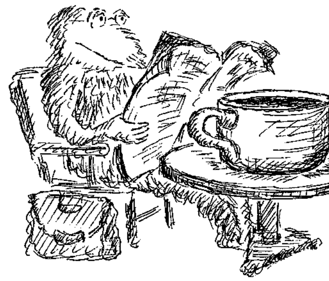
"Steve just had that drive," said John Higbe, who snapped the ball to Spurrier in some of those games. "He seemed aloof even then—some people thought he was arrogant—but when you were with him in the huddle, no matter how bad things looked, you never felt like you were going to lose."

In 1967, the San Francisco 49ers took Spurrier in the draft, but they already had a quarterback, John Brodie, who was the highest-paid football player of his time. For the next five seasons, Spurrier did a lot of watching, enjoyed a lot of golf, and saw playing time mostly as the team's punter. He did well when he got the chance. In 1972, when Brodie was injured, Spurrier led the 49ers to a third consecutive Western Division championship, winning five of the team's last six games. When Brodie retired and Spurrier finally took over, he separated his shoulder in a preseason game and sat out the whole season. After yet another disappointing season, he was taken by one of the league's expansion teams, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The Buccaneers consisted of rookies, washouts, has-beens, and might-have-beens, and they lost every game. "Hey, we set a record that year," Spurrier said with mock pride. "The only oh-and-fourteen record in N.F.L. history! I remember a speech our coach, John McKay, was giving us at one point during that season. He was emphasizing that games were lost in the trenches, by failing to block and tackle on the front lines. And as he was talking he noticed a lineman asleep in the back. He called his name, woke him up, and asked, 'Where are most games lost?' And the lineman says, 'Right here in Tampa, sir.' "

"John McKay was the most caustic individual I ever met in my life," Spurrier's former teammate the wide receiver Barry Smith recalled. McKay was particularly tough on Spurrier, the biggest star on the roster. "I tell you this," Smith said. "If there was one man in this world who was totally shocked by Steve's later success as a coach it's John McKay."

Spurrier was released by McKay after one season. He was picked up by the Denver Broncos, who cut him, and then he landed with Don Shula's Miami Dolphins just before the 1977 season was about to start. He and Jerri had three small children. The situation in Miami looked stable. They rented a house and sent the children off to school. Days after settling in, Spurrier phoned his wife with bad news. Shula had cut him.



They returned to Gainesville, where they had always kept a home for the off-season. Spurrier's whole career had been in football, and at that point he didn't have his college degree. He was offered work selling insurance and selling cars, prospects that he and Jerri found deeply unappealing. Their financial situation was deteriorating.

"I did not make much money as a pro football player—a little bit, not a lot," Spurrier said. "I watched the Gators play and thought I needed to get a job. Coaching was something that seemed like fun and not a lot of work."

Spurrier went on, "I'm not very good at working. We all need to do as a profession something that we find fun. I'd been around a lot of good coaches and sorry coaches in my career—or average coaches, I should say, not sorry—and I thought, By God, if he can do this for a living, so can I."

Unfortunately, nobody was hiring. Just to break in, Spurrier agreed to help out with the Gator quarterbacks. Nearly twenty years later, in 1990, after coaching at Georgia Tech, at Duke, and for the Tampa Bay Bandits, of the ill-fated United States Football League, he returned to the University of Florida as

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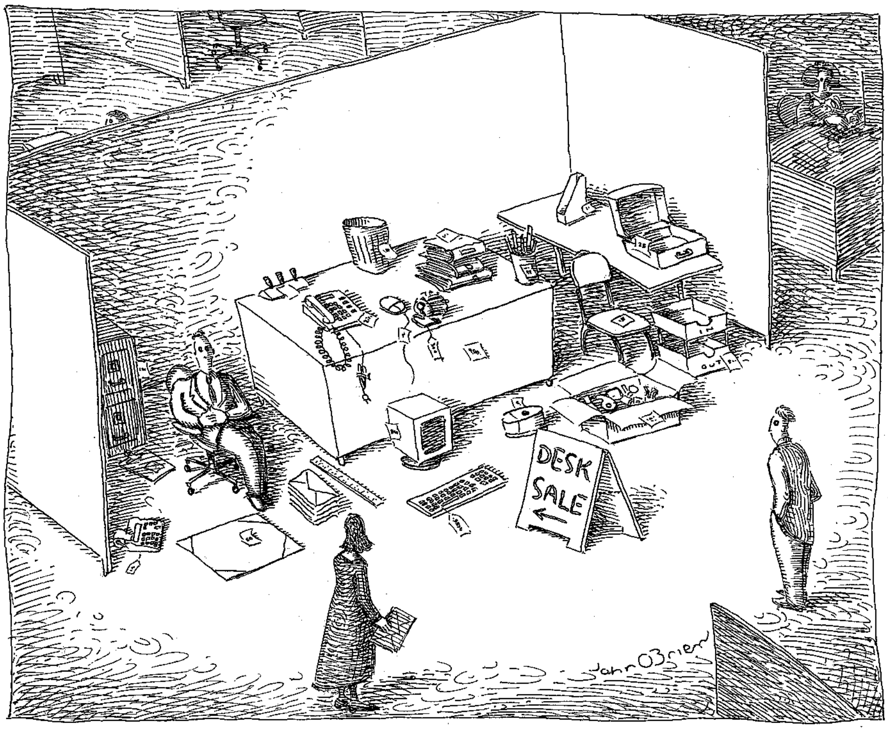

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head coach. He led the Gators to their first national championship, in 1996, and in his twelve-year tenure there Spurrier compiled one of the most successful records of any major college coach in history. He recently told Pat Summitt, the University of Tennessee's celebrated women's basketball coach, "You and I both know why we do this. We do it so we can play games our whole lives. This way, we don't ever have to grow up."

It isn't easy playing for Spurrier. He does not always live up to the rules on his "Guidelines." No. 2 reads: "After chewing out a player, say something positive to bring him back tomorrow." No. 4 reads: "If you must criticize, do it to a player's face, not downtown or to the media. End all criticism with something positive."

"Sometimes he's as biting with his players as McKay was to us," his former teammate Lee McGriff said. "I know how much he hated it when McKay did it to him, but now he does it to players himself."

Since quarterbacks are the focus of Spurrier's attention, they feel his perfectionism the most. Bobby Sabelhaus, an All-American who set records as a high-school quarterback in Maryland, and who was actively courted by many university football programs in 1995, says he still has nightmares about Coach Spurrier. He chose Florida not because Spurrier went out of his way to recruit him—"Of all the coaches who made pitches to me, he was the least appealing"—but because he knew Spurrier was a winner. His experience with Florida was a disaster that ultimately drove him out of football.

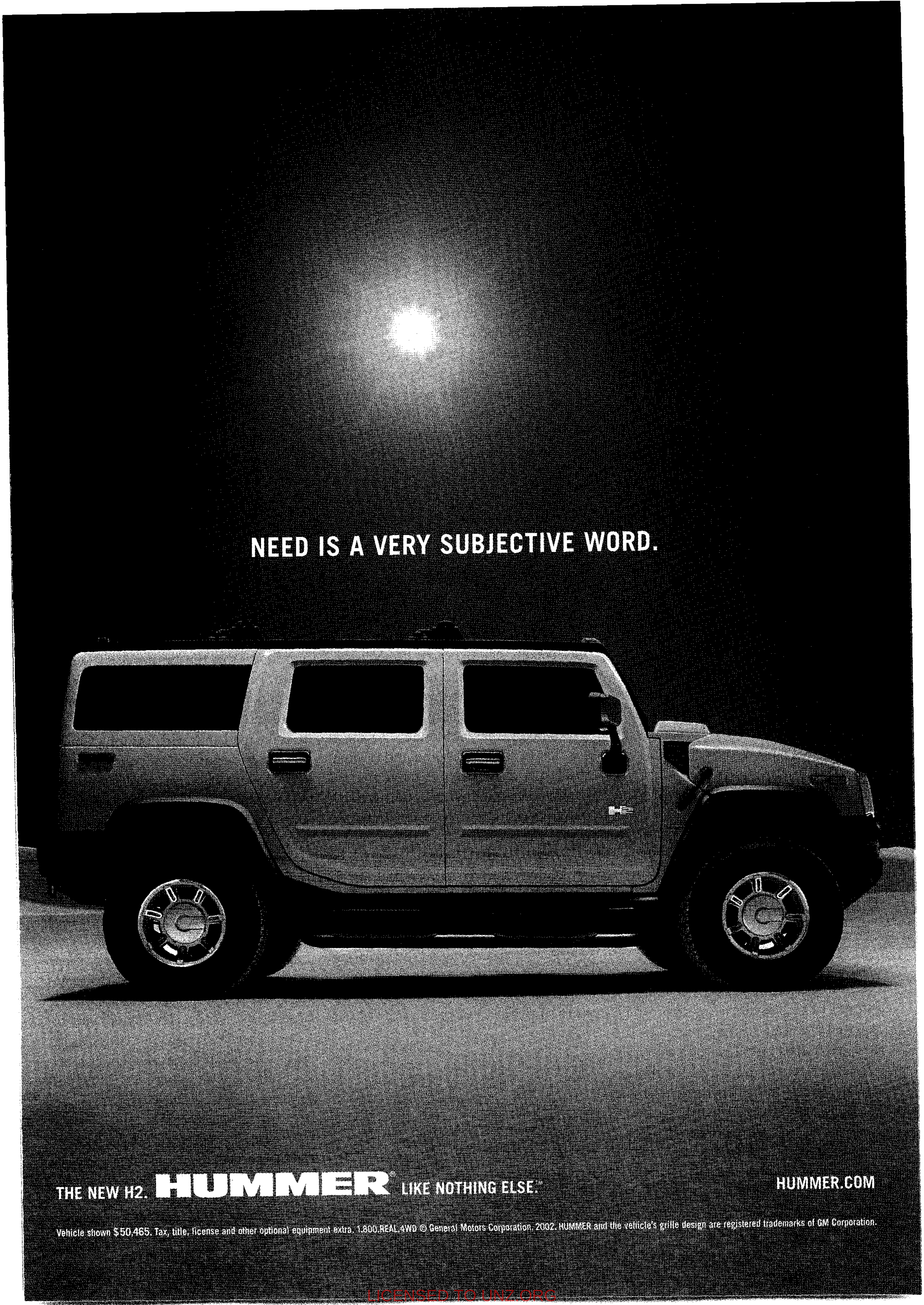
"Everything I did was wrong," Sabelhaus said. "I was used to coaches yelling at me, but they would also sometimes pat you on the back. Not Spurrier. Even when I threw a touchdown pass in practice once, he said to me, 'Are you just stupid or is it a lack of talent?' I hadn't run the play the exact way he wanted me to. I had an odd, sidearm throwing motion that had served me pretty well"—Sabelhaus had broken all records as a high-school passer—"and Spurrier wanted me to change it to the way he threw the ball. I tried, but it threw me off so badly that I couldn't throw accurately anymore. He was constantly berating me. I would wake up in the morning and spend the entire day dreading the afternoon meeting. The other quarterbacks went through the same thing. Danny Wuerffel"—who would win the Heisman Trophy leading Florida to the national championship in 1996—"tried to help me. He encouraged me, and told me Spurrier had treated him the same way as a freshman. Wuerffel was the kind of guy who could take it. Not me."

To those willing to endure Spurrier's treatment, the payoff is the coach's undying loyalty. When he joined the Redskins this year, Spurrier didn't recruit the top names among available quarterback free agents; he signed Wuerffel and Matthews, neither of whom had translated his success at the University of Florida into a stellar N.F.L. career. Both have been given a rare second chance with the Redskins, in part because of Spurrier's loyalty to them, in part because he knows they have learned to run his plays the way he wants them run.

Spurrier is impatient with the tact that his position demands. By tradition, the head coach does not boast, speak ill of opponents, or complain. In the N.F.L., whatever he says is amplified a hundred thousand times, especially if he loses his cool or breaches the unwritten code. The more outrageous a comment can be made to seem—whatever its original intent—the more widely it is broadcast, dissected, criticized, and gleefully commented on by the sports media. A person in this position would be wise not to speak at all, but head coaches are constantly called upon to give speeches and interviews, and to answer the goading questions of the press. Most head coaches talk a lot but say little. Spurrier is incautious and irreverent, and the media loves him for it.

As head coach in Florida, he gave speeches all over the state to Gator booster clubs. They roared when he described his rival F.S.U. as "Free Shoes University," after a local shoestore gave F.S.U. players free cleats, and when he lamented the destruction of books in a fire at Auburn University, because some of them "hadn't even been colored yet."

"Where I come from, talking a little smack is part of the game," he said. "You dish it out, but you got to be able to take it, too. It's all in the spirit of fun. A lot of it comes about because what I say gets misrepresented. Like taking over this job. Folks ask me how I expect us to do. Well, I expect to win my division. I didn't predict that I would, but that's what I expect of my football team. We may make it or we may not, but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what am I supposed to expect? That we'll lose?"

Spurrier reads everything that's written about him, and says he remembers every word. "And if I don't like it I call them and let them know about it," he said. "They can criticize me, that's fair, but when they start saying things that I didn't say, that gets me going."

A number of Florida writers have been the recipients of insulting notes from Spurrier. He called Gerald Ensley, of the Tallahassee *Democrat*, an "a-hole," and said that Mark Bradley, of the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution*, was "chickenshit." In 1996, one of the big games on the Gators schedule was against the University of Tennessee Volunteers. The Knoxville *News-Sentinel* phoned the Orlando *Sentinel's* Gator-beat reporter, Chris Harry, before the season started and asked if he would file four stories for them in advance of the big game, offering analysis from the Gainesville perspective. It's a common practice on sports pages.

Harry filed the stories. Without his knowledge, the *News-Sentinel* was running them under the rubric "From the Enemy Camp," illustrated with a pair of binoculars.

One morning, Harry's phone rang, and he picked it up to hear Spurrier, his voice almost a whisper. "How much are they paying you?" the coach asked.

"What?"

"How much are they paying you, Chris Harry, to be a spy?"

"Everything I saw at the scrimmages was seen by thousands of other people!" Harry protested.

"Yeah, but they didn't have to send their own people down here, did they? Because they had you."

Spurrier said he was going to bar reporters from all future practices and scrimmages. The shutdown prompted a story in a Gainesville newspaper, which quoted Spurrier naming Harry as the culprit. According to Harry, the story, and Spurrier's remarks, resulted in phoned death threats at his Gainesville home.

The Gators won the game easily. The next week, Spurrier reopened practices, and he slapped Harry on the back when he saw him.

"Hey, Chrissie, how you doin'?" the coach asked.

Harry felt less forgiving. He explained about the death threats, how alarmed he and his wife had been.

The coach was unapologetic.

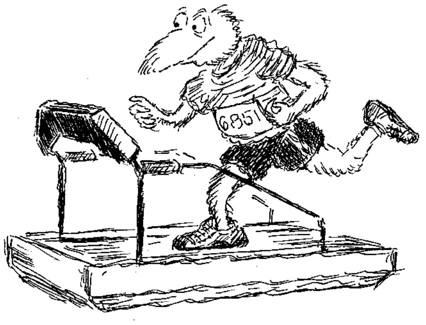
"Well, you shouldn't have done that story," he said.

Spurrier's contract with the Redskins will expire after the 2007 season, when he's sixty-two. According to his longtime friend Norm Carlson, who is an assistant athletic director at the University of Florida, Spurrier has said for years that he plans to retire in his early sixties. When he announced his decision to step down as Florida coach earlier this year, he said he wanted to see "if my ballplays will work in the pros." So far, his record is mediocre.

The Redskins were crushed in their second game, on September 16th. In front of eighty-five thousand Washington fans and a national ABC "Monday Night Football" audience, the Philadelphia Eagles beat them, 37–7. Spurrier's offense looked as lame and collegiate as his detractors had predicted. It scored no points (the touchdown came on a punt return) and managed to move the ball into the Eagles' half of the field only once during the entire game—after an Eagles penalty handed them fifteen yards.

On the sidelines, Spurrier, wearing a white shirt, was in agony, head in hands, his face a mask of disappointment and frustration. After one blunder, he flapped his lips in such a genuine and original display of disgust that it made the TV program's highlights reel, and was replayed over and over in slow motion the rest of the week.

The next two weeks weren't much better. Midway through a third-week loss to the San Francisco 49ers, Spurrier benched Matthews for Wuerffel, but still the team failed to score more than one touchdown. Spurrier replaced Wuerffel the following week, against the Tennessee Titans, with the rookie Patrick Ramsey, and got a win and a surprising performance out of the young quarterback. Afterward, Spurrier expressed delight in the rookie's play—Ramsey threw two touchdown passes and completed twenty of his thirty-four passes for two hundred and sixty-eight yards—and pronounced him the team's new starting quarterback. The next week, though, Ramsey threw three interceptions, and the Redskins lost, 43–27. Spurrier said, "It's a little frustrating. You think you have things set, and it doesn't always work out." He replaced Ramsey with Matthews for the team's seventh game, against the Indianapolis Colts, and won with a meat-and-potatoes game plan that bore little resemblance to his usual trickery.



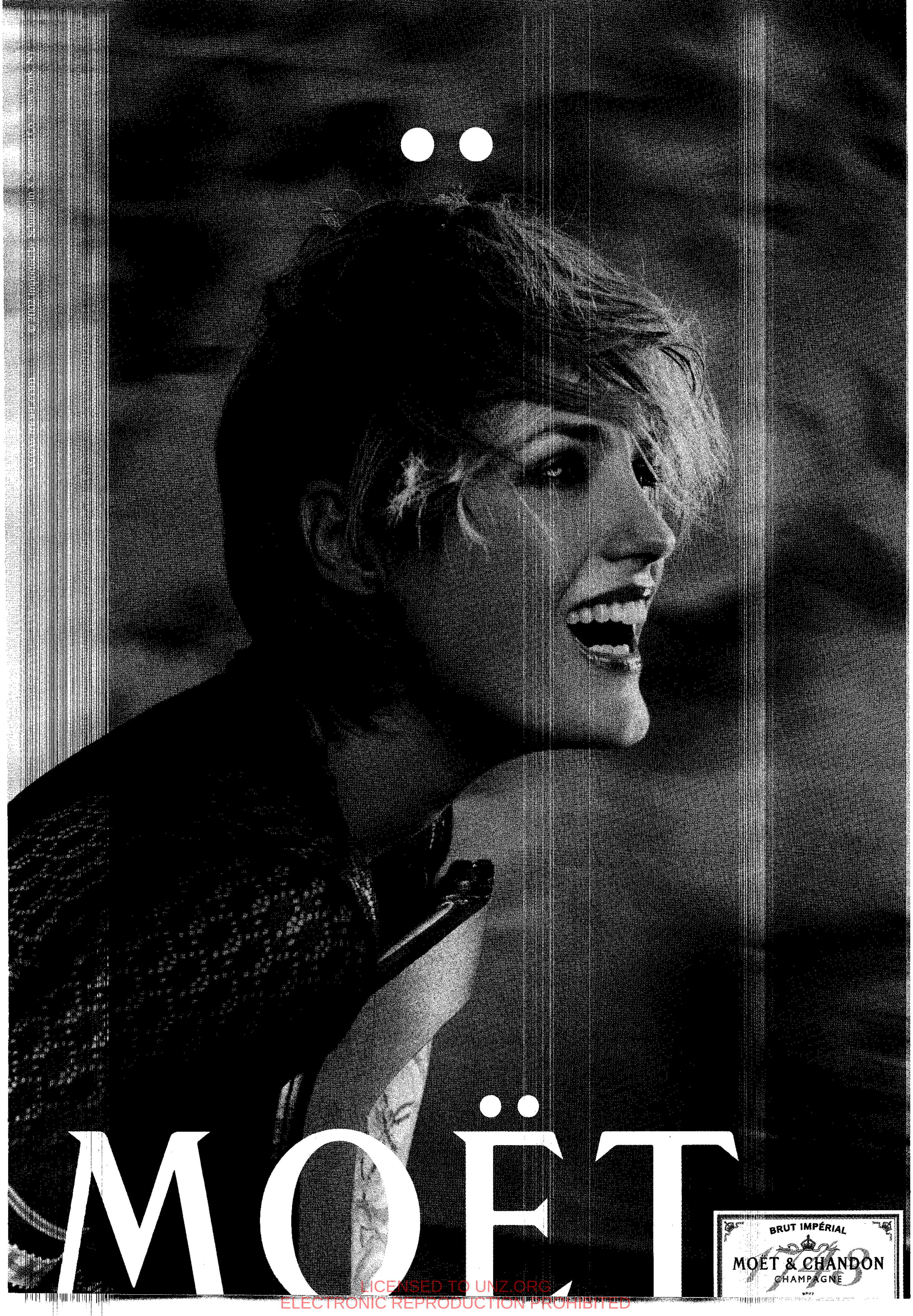
The team's performance has been so ugly that Spurrier has started coming to work early and showing up on weekends. The season still has a long way to go, and the other three teams in the N.F.C. East (the division Spurrier expects to win) have also struggled. The Eagles had opened up a two-game lead on them when this story went to press. The Redskins might surprise everybody, but it's looking more and more doubtful.

Spurrier is patient, for now. His various lists of coaching maxims all include reminders that the journey is its own reward. No. 16: "The road is better than the end. The games, the competition, is more fun than the trophies." But note that the road ends with a trophy. One of the reasons Spurrier "talks smack," runs up the score when his team is winning, and taunts his opponents—whether over a chessboard, on the golf course, or before a football game—is to raise the stakes. Having something personal on the line enlivens the joust and sweetens the victory. Of course, when you play this way losing is more humiliating, too, but Spurrier accepts the bargain.

He was bewildered, and insulted, when, in the final minutes of the Monday-night Eagles blowout, Philadelphia's head coach, Andy Reid, chose not to kick an easy field goal to add three more points. Earlier in the game, pepper spray from a fracas with police had drifted out of the stands, sending Reid and his team sprinting from the sidelines, gasping for air. After the Eagles gallantly declined to run up the score, Spurrier caught a whiff of something else from across the field.

It smelled like pity.

"I still don't know why he did that," Spurrier said. ♦



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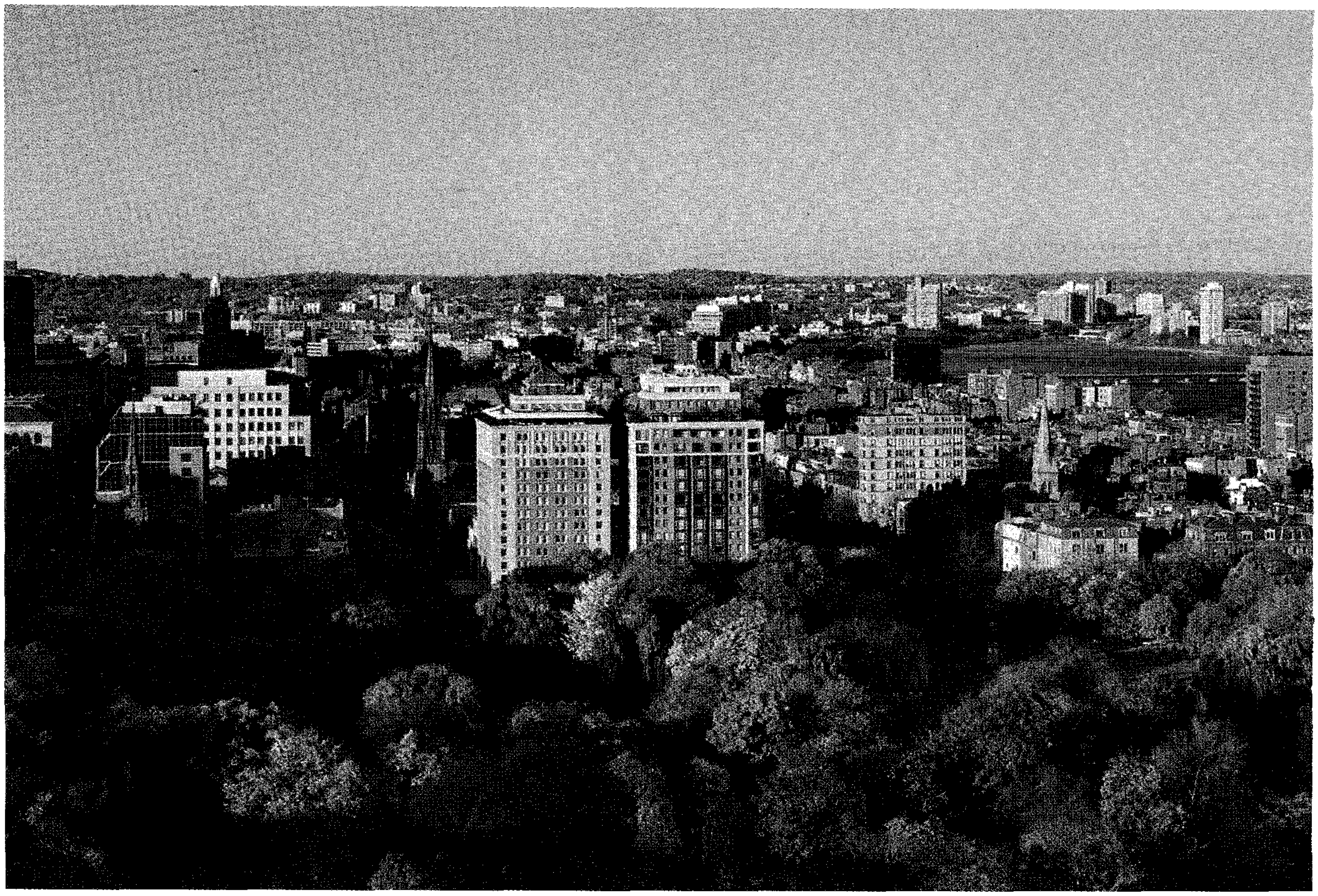

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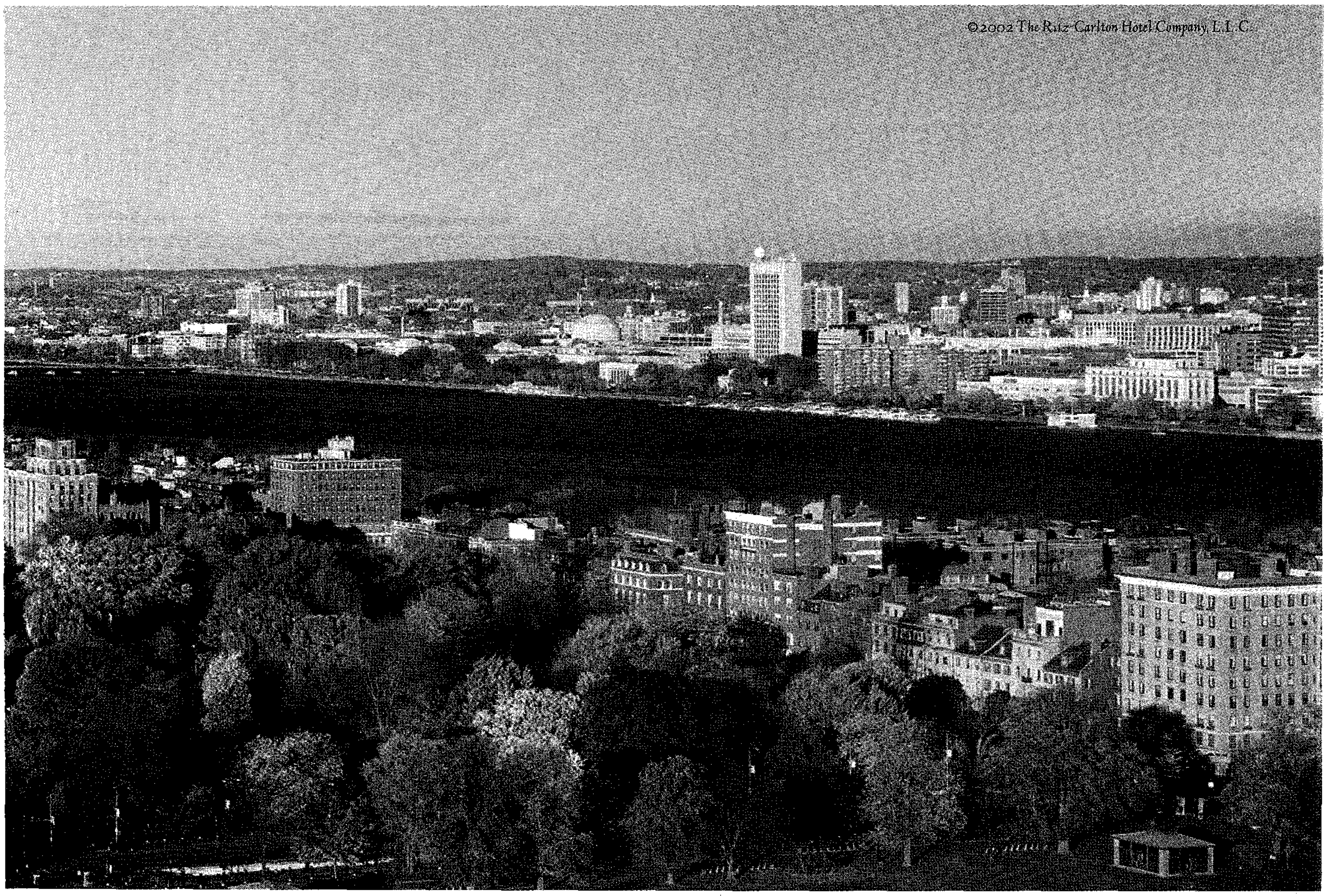

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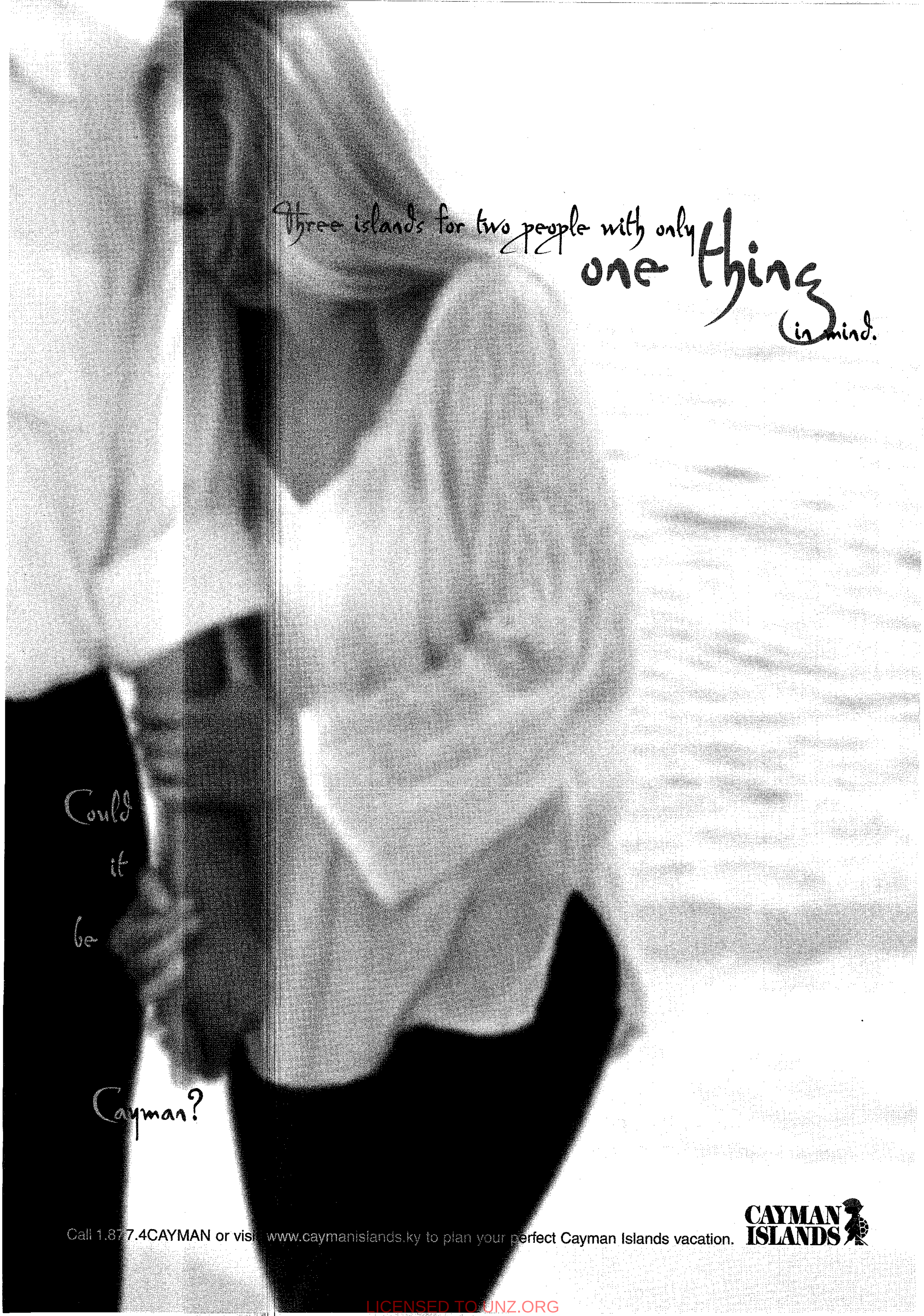
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ON IDYLL TIME

By NAO HAUSER

The great allure of an island vacation is the moat it offers the psyche. Ocean vistas as far as the eye can see promise to keep the world at bay, regardless of electronic reality. But to make the most of that sense of being cut off, the island has to be one you can connect with—where the isolation feels like freedom.

That's the key to what *Islands* magazine editor James Badham calls the current trend among island travellers to "put together portfolios of places that fit their personalities." And what would that collection include? Those with a taste for what Badham calls the "exquisite, exotic, and remote" are still heading for the Seychelles and the Maldives. But on the whole, he adds, "people are making more use of islands closer to home." For the eastern half of the country, this means the Caribbean, where "if you're a golf addict, you're covered. Ditto fishing or diving, or shopping and beach-sitting. And there's plenty of history and culture." Another perk: "With many islands so close together, you can often enrich your travel experience by ferrying to neighboring islands for day trips."

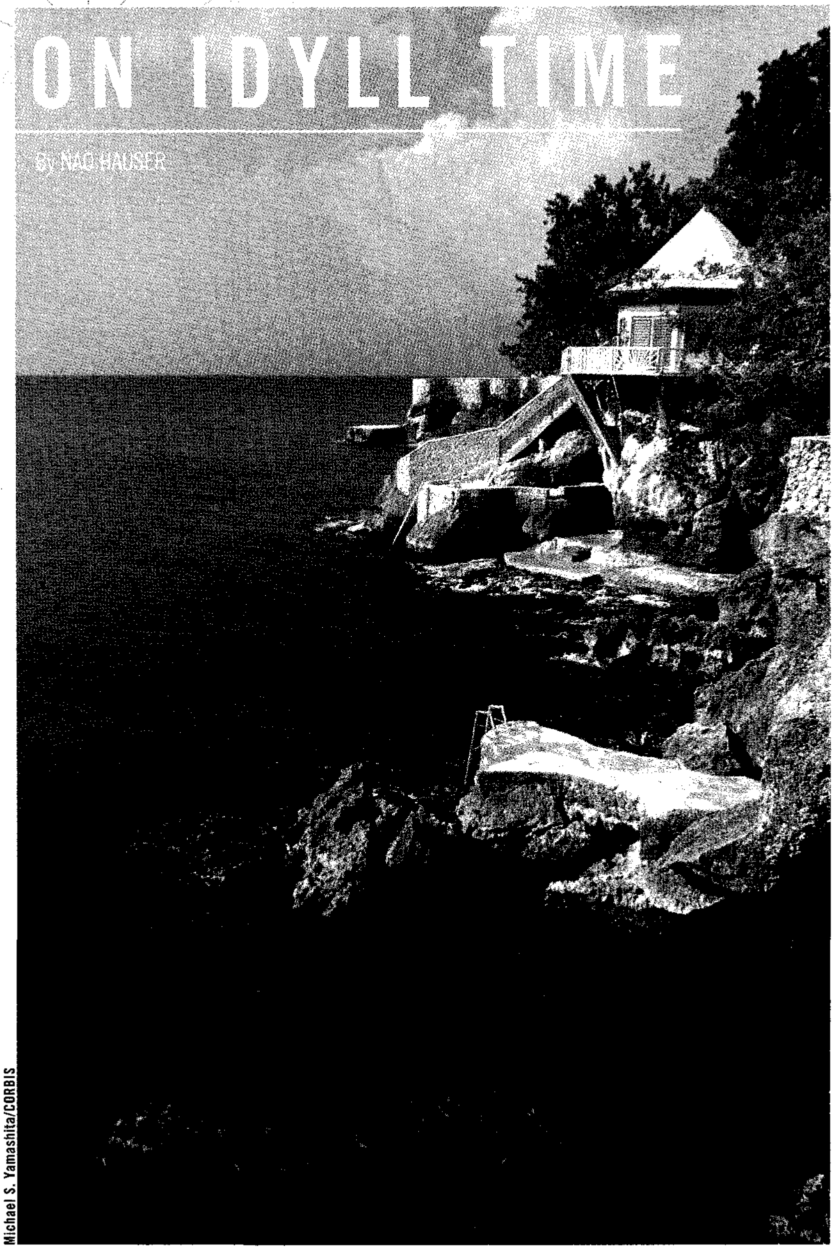
Still, there are many personal portfolios stuffed with mental postcards of the volcanic authority of the Big Island or Maui, to say nothing of Hawaii's green uplands and beaches gauzed pink at sunset. "The Lord of the Rings" left more than a few film buffs longing for the unpopulated glacial sculpture of New Zealand. And the islands of the Mediterranean are getting a second look this year from travellers thinking that maybe a European village with deluxe accommodations, rich ancient history, savory cuisine, and no land links is the best of all possible worlds.

The individuality of Caribbean islands suggests the variety of a deck of playing cards, where you get to pick your own from the spread: The Turks and Caicos for just snorkeling and vegging on the beach, possibly in the privacy of Pine Cay. Or Nevis for romantic accommodations, and Aruba for its nightlife.

Cuba remains the forbidden fruit of the Caribbean. To travel there legally, you have to be licensed to do so for cultural reasons. Fortunately for anyone who fell for the Wim Wenders-directed "Buena Vista Social Club," there are many legitimate cultural connections. For people who claim an affinity to sports, the arts, and naturalist pursuits, there is an appropriate licensed tour.

For experienced Caribbean travellers who claim they can't possibly choose one island as their favorite, Jamaica holds most of the cards. Visitors can river raft in its verdant mountains or golf on the championship courses in Montego Bay. Honeymooners return to Negril for its sunsets and the town's determined casualness. Jamaican cuisine is distinguished not only by jerk chicken and pork but also by some of the world's finest java. But Jamaica's irresistible draw, according to Denver travel agent Meg Austin, who specializes in both family and diving vacation planning, is the friendliness of Jamaicans, adding this can be particularly comforting when travelling with a child.

The fortieth anniversary of Jamaica's independence is marked both by celebrations of the past and with new attractions. The opening of a Sea Trek center at Doctor's Cove in Montego Bay will



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CLIFFHANGING

Unobstructed views and forty-foot rock formations on Negril's West End draw the intrepid and romantics alike.

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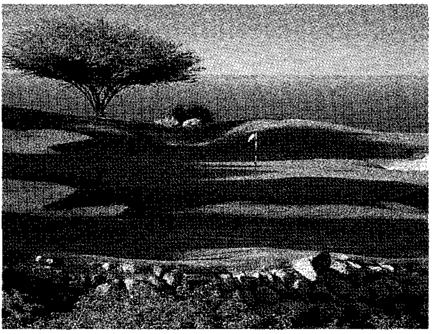
invite guests, eight and up, to descend to the floor of the Caribbean with only a lightweight safety helmet and a guide. No scuba equipment or special training is needed to walk in the deep. Two events to mark on the calendar: the second annual Reggae Marathon on December 7th in Negril, where Rastafarian drummers will launch runners on the 26.2-mile coastal course with a pre-dawn, torch-lit drumming ritual. And the Air Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival, January 30–February 1, on the Cinnamon Hill Ocean Course at the Wyndham Rose Hall in Montego Bay, with headliners Al Jarreau and The Spinners. There's still a chance to catch the Fourth Annual International Jamerican Film & Music Festival at The Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall, Montego Bay on November 20–24. (*E!* calls it one of the world's ten best film festivals.) For vacationing golfers, the White Witch champion course at The Ritz-Carlton, designed by Robert Von Hagge, has received raves for its panoramic views of the Caribbean from sixteen of its eighteen holes.



courtesy of The Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall

WHITE MAGIC

Golf course with a ghostly nineteenth-century provenance.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BEACH

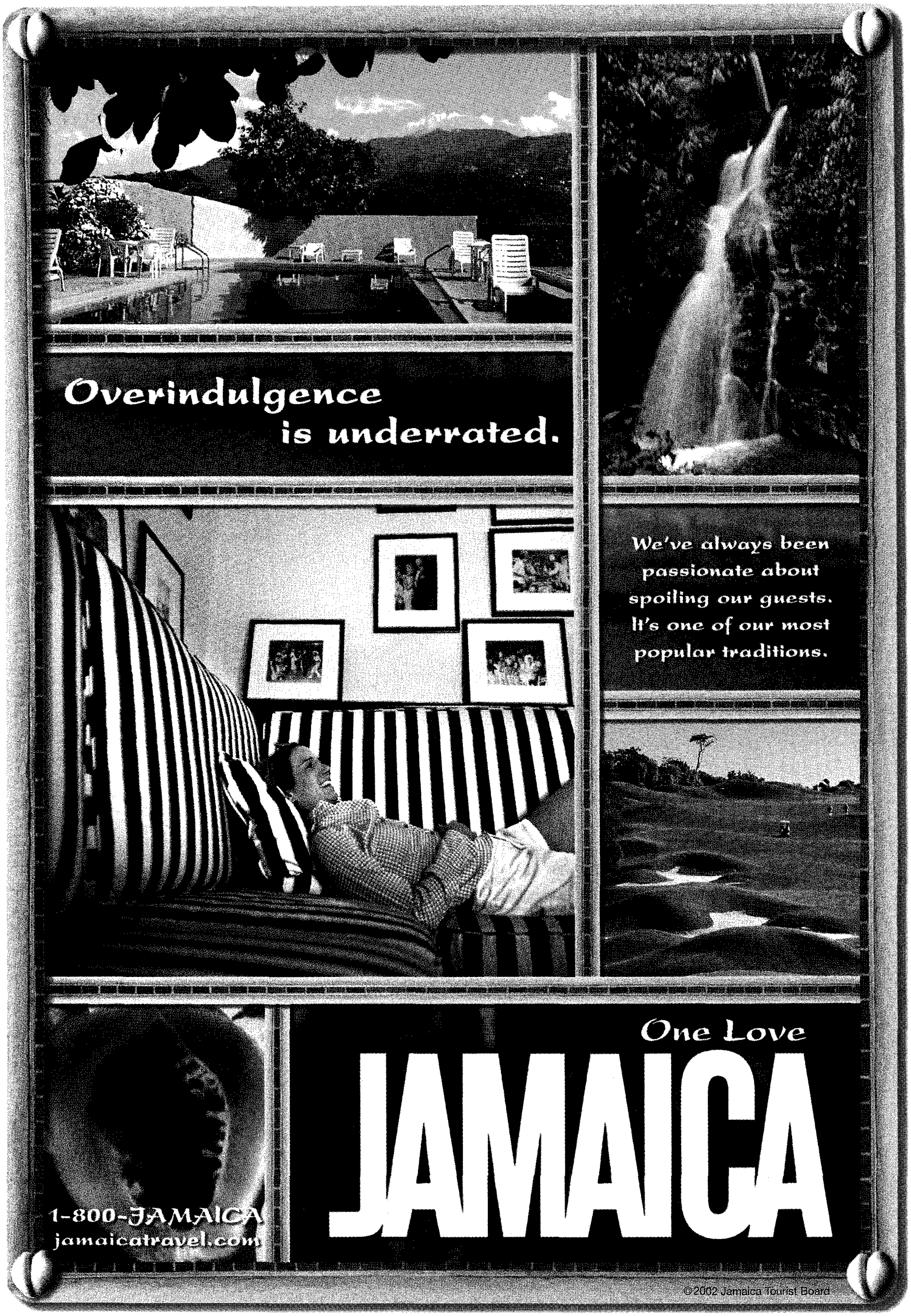
Stretches of sand are an island's wardrobe that never goes out of style. Beach-lovers collect them, turning quests for the perfect visual harmony of sand, sea, and sky, as well as precious privacy, into the main reason for island travel. For such travellers, Antigua, with its 365 beaches, offers, literally, a year's worth of attractions. The island's other claim to fame is historic English Harbor, one of the world's most protected and a favorite of yachtsmen. Not far from the harbor, and on its own hundred-acre private peninsula at Mamora Bay, the 250-room St. James's Club includes among its luxuries four restaurants, a full-service marina, and two sprawls of sand meeting the expanse of turquoise water. A sister hotel on the western side of the island, seventy-room Galley Bay welcomes couples to a forty-acre Shangri-La of lush gardens and secluded beach in a protected bird sanctuary. This year St. James's Club has taken over the former Wyndham Morgan Bay on St. Lucia's Choc Beach, cherished for its two extinct volcanoes and lush palm trees. To this tranquility, the Club brings attentive service, more dining choices, and a new spa with treatments created from native greenery.

At Elbow Beach in Bermuda, the pink-sand crescent is acknowledged for its beauty on an island of pageant-winners. The elegant resort, opened in 1908, is once again reserving its hotel-front beach exclusively for guests. To make a stay more compelling, a new complex includes the Lido Restaurant, which combines Mediterranean fare with ocean views from every table, the alfresco Sea Breeze Cafe, and new nightclub, Deep.

DIVE RIGHT IN!

There is excellent diving all around the Caribbean, notably in Bonaire and around the cays off the coast of Belize. And a fact that many divers in colder northern climes can cling to is that some of the best diving, in both the Cayman Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands, is an easy flight away. But not all attractions there are of the deep-sea variety.

The Ritz-Carlton on St. Thomas is close enough to nurture the illusion that only a couple of cab rides separate a harried New Yorker from its serene vantage on thirty beachfront acres, twenty minutes from Charlotte Amalie. Recent renovations have brought a spa that calms and renews with Caribbean views and indulgent treatments. New Ritz-Carlton Club villa residences offer completely carefree privacy—a home with hotel services. But even with this expansion to two hundred accommodations, the Ritz remains a small gem,



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perfectly sited on its water overlook along Great Bay and offering day sails and sunset cruises on the fifty-three-foot catamaran Lady Lynsey.

The Cayman Islands are synonymous with some of the best diving in the world. Along the uncommonly lavish white-sand expanse of Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman, the luxe condo resort Lacovia, with its Spanish-style architecture and terra-cotta roofs, is dive specialist Meg Austin's favorite place to stay. But each of the Caymans offers a different experience. In fact, the "sister islands" of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman complement the diving with memorable exploration on terra firma. Cayman Brac, which takes its name from its 140-foot bluff, offers not only startling views but also has caves to explore and nearly two hundred bird species in partial or full-time residence. High season is November to April, when wetland migrants, such as egrets, plovers, and spoonbills, drop in; the endangered Cayman Brac parrot, however, is a year-round inhabitant. Little Cayman is best known for the rookery at the 204-acre Booby Nature Reserve, its fly casting, its diving at Bloody Bay Wall, and its road signs warning drivers and cyclists to slow down at iguana crossings.

courtesy of Elite Island Resorts

TOUCH OF GAUGUIN
Galley Bay in Antigua, where it's currently eighty degrees and breezy.

HAWAIIAN AYES

The tony resort buzz in Hawaii definitely shifted to the Big Island six years ago, after the Four Seasons Hualalai opened. But now a growing counter-buzz has stirred with an appreciation for both the quietness of some of the other islands and the cosmopolitanism of Honolulu.

For connoisseurs, the dining status of the capital city has risen to that of Pacific Rim giants like Sydney. The creative integration of European and Asian cuisines at Alan Wong's, Chef Mavro's, Hoku's, and other restaurants has drawn attention not only to the star chefs, but also to the wealth of local talent and ingredients displayed elsewhere, especially in smaller Chinese and Japanese eateries—reason enough for spending at least a few days in Waikiki before heading for one of the more rustic islands. Underscoring the invitation, the makeover of Kalakawa Avenue has greatly reduced traffic and enhanced its beachside promenade. Setting and cuisine now come together once a month at an outdoor "Taste of Honolulu" Sunday brunch, supported and staffed by the finest chefs. It's worth remembering, too, that there are plenty of ways to get away from the business bustle of Waikiki without leaving Oahu. Two escapes recommended by Los Angeles travel agent Susan Tanzman: Waimanele Beach, which, favored for bodysurfing, is empty during weekdays, as well as one of the Wild Side sailing expeditions for swimming with dolphins and sea turtles.

The flip side of Honolulu's urban thrum is the slower-paced Kauai, where no building is taller than the tallest coconut palm. The volcanic

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>> > NEWSLINE

NEVIS—Known as the Queen of the Caribbean, the serene West Indies island is ringed by beaches and cloaked by rain forests in the foothills of a dormant volcano. The favorite pastime/tourist attraction? Monthly horse racing at Indian Castle Racetrack. Best restaurant for celeb sightings? Bananas, located on the overhanging patio at the Cliffdwellers Hotel above Tamarind Bay. ST. LUCIA—New at luxe ***Anse Chastanet Resort***: both a tropical adventure package including jungle biking and scuba diving and a tranquility package of spa treatments and water-taxi transport to nearby Anse Mamin beach on the island's unspoiled southwestern Caribbean coast near Soufrière.

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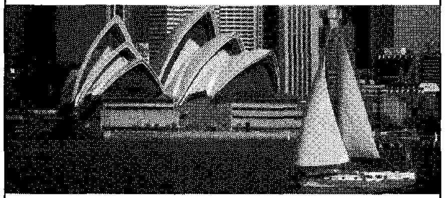

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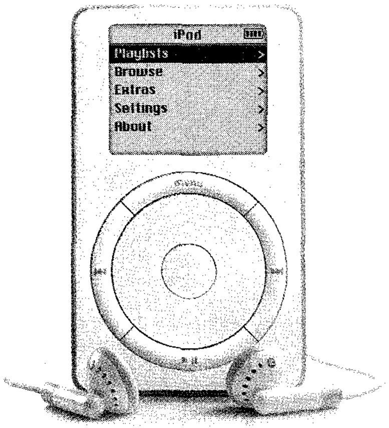

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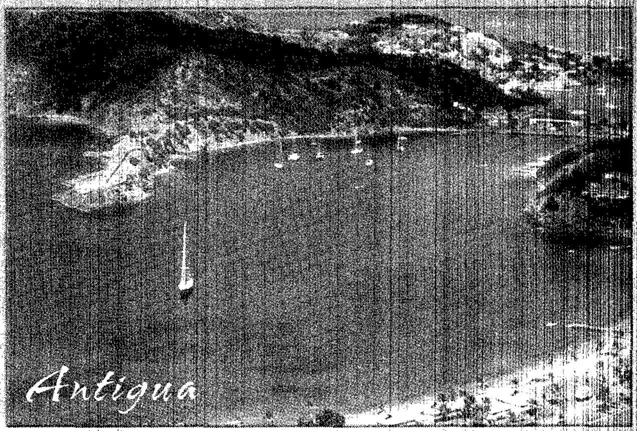

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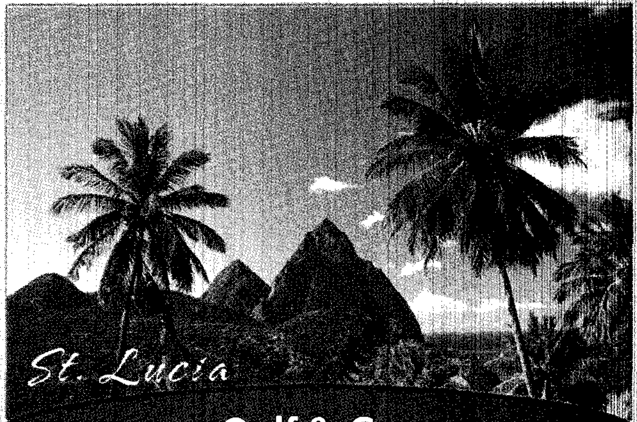

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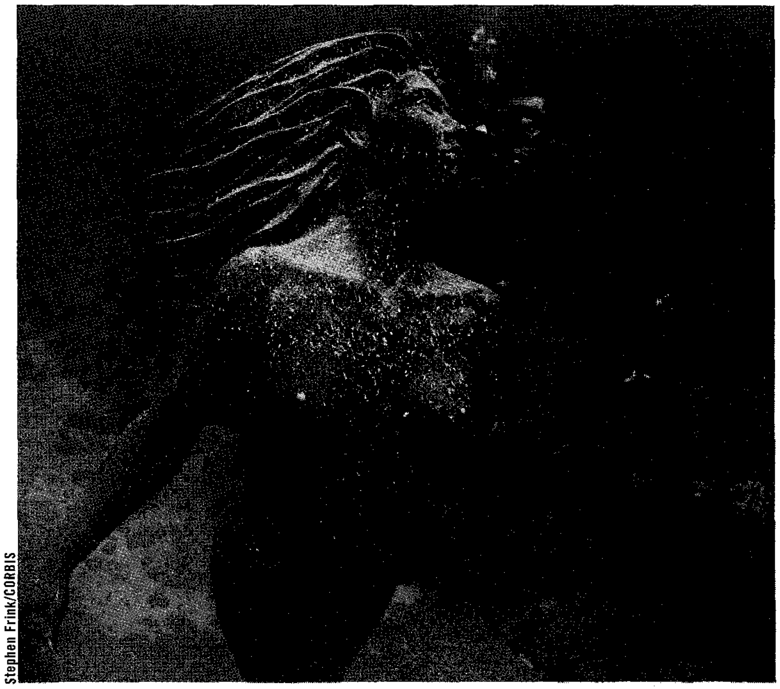
cragginess of Kauai, one feature of which is Waimea Canyon, so-called the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific," is especially alluring to hikers. But the island is hardly bereft of comfort. The Anara Spa at the Hyatt Regency Kauai Resort is ready to minister pampering treatments based on such indigenous ingredients as ginger and local coffee.

All choices converge on Maui. The island's many resorts, restaurants, and Lahaina galleries do nothing to disrupt the dreamlike beauty of the road to Hana, which you can now drive with a CD guide (ask at your hotel). Nor do they intrude on the grandeur hikers find in the Iao Valley or on Haleakala. But to complete the outdoor choices, The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua, has three championship golf courses as well as secluded beaches and a spa. And there's no doubt that Maui gets a big repeat clientele: Migrating whales return every



Stephen Frink/CORBIS

AH, THE CAYMANS

A larger-than-life bronze mermaid statue is a popular dive site in Grand Cayman waters.

ISLE BE SEEING YOU

Once the exclusive domain of recluses and movie stars intent on fending off the paparazzi, entire islands in coveted locales are oftentimes more affordable than a classic-six on Manhattan's Upper West Side. And when John Donne reflected, "No man is an island," he hadn't figured on volunteer castaways seeking the insular life.

A search for island isolation can start with **Vladi-private-islands.de**, which has handled the sale of more than a thousand islands in the past thirty years. The Web site has listings that range from the eight-island Bock Cay Archipelago in the Bahamas for $13.3 million, to Columbia Island, an undeveloped 1.5-acre islet twelve miles from downtown Manhattan on Long Island Sound off New Rochelle for $585,000. Not ready to take the financial plunge? Full-isle rentals on Forsyth Island in New Zealand go for $300 per day for six to eight guests and on Seabird Island in Florida from $3,695 per week with a maximum of eight guests.

For island barons looking to navigate the real estate waters, there are potential investment downsides to consider, such as global warming, which could erode a sandy cay or two. As for uninvited guests that may wash up on your shore, **Privateislandsonline.com** has you covered: The Web site's flash-based action game helps wannabe Gilligans ward off rampaging pirates. *–Dan Ouellette*

>> > NEWSLINE

BEQUIA—Leave the frenzy of mainland life for the coconut and citrus tree groves at ***Spring on Bequia***, where the hotel's cuisine is prepared with fresh food indigenous to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. YOUNG ISLAND—Peacocks and parrots. Mango and breadfruit trees. A floating bar that's a short swim away from the beach. The thirty-five-acre resort on a private island just off St. Vincent's shore features ocean-view cottages and two yachts for chartered day sails. An overnight sail with captain and cook is available with a seven-day minimum visit. >

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winter, with traffic usually peaking in March, when wise guests pack binoculars to peer out from hotel balconies.

SCENE STEALER

New Zealand's remoteness has protected its islands from overdevelopment and tourism. So much of its raw, relatively young scenery, in geologic terms, is uncluttered to the point of being surrealistic in what is otherwise a modern nation. This, of course, helped make it a perfect stand-in for Middle Earth in "Lord of the Rings." Her boundless enthusiasm for the setting has drawn Donna Thomas of New Zealand Travel there more than thirty times, prompting her to organize everything from motorcycle tours of wineries on the North Island to getaways for walkers on southernmost Stewart Island.

Naming just a handful of must-sees in the thousand-mile-long country where summer begins next month, Thomas begins on the North Island, east of Auckland, with the Coromandel Peninsula, for its scenic juxtaposition of beaches and bush, and then goes to the home of Maori culture in the Rotorua/Taupo area. A flight or ferry will take you to the South Island and Marlborough Sound for what Thomas calls "my idea of heaven," with its breathtaking panorama from Queen Charlotte Drive. On the west there is the thirteen-kilometer Fox Glacier-sculpted drama and the fjords around Milford Sound.

SWEPT AWAY

The glamour that film directors Lina Wertmüller and Guy Ritchie brought to Sardinia pales in comparison to that which was bestowed by the Aga Khan decades ago when he developed the Costa Smeralda, with its chic retreats around Porto Cervo. The best known of these is the Cala Di Volpe Hotel,

BETTER BY BOAT

To approach an island from the sea is to experience the truth of its terrain in a way that flying in can't match. Passengers on the four, two-week cruises being offered on the Crystal Harmony next year from March to May will see the beauty and history of Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong unfold as it did to past explorers and traders, deepening the impact of cultural landmarks in such cities as Kyoto and Nagoya. The four sailings also include visits to Shanghai and a three-night land program in Beijing. Choose the "Cathay Odyssey" cruise, March 23–April 6, from Yokohama to Beijing, and the onboard "Wine & Food Festival" will add the enticements of great Asian cuisine to those of sightseeing in Kobe, Hiroshima, Kagoshima, and Shanghai.

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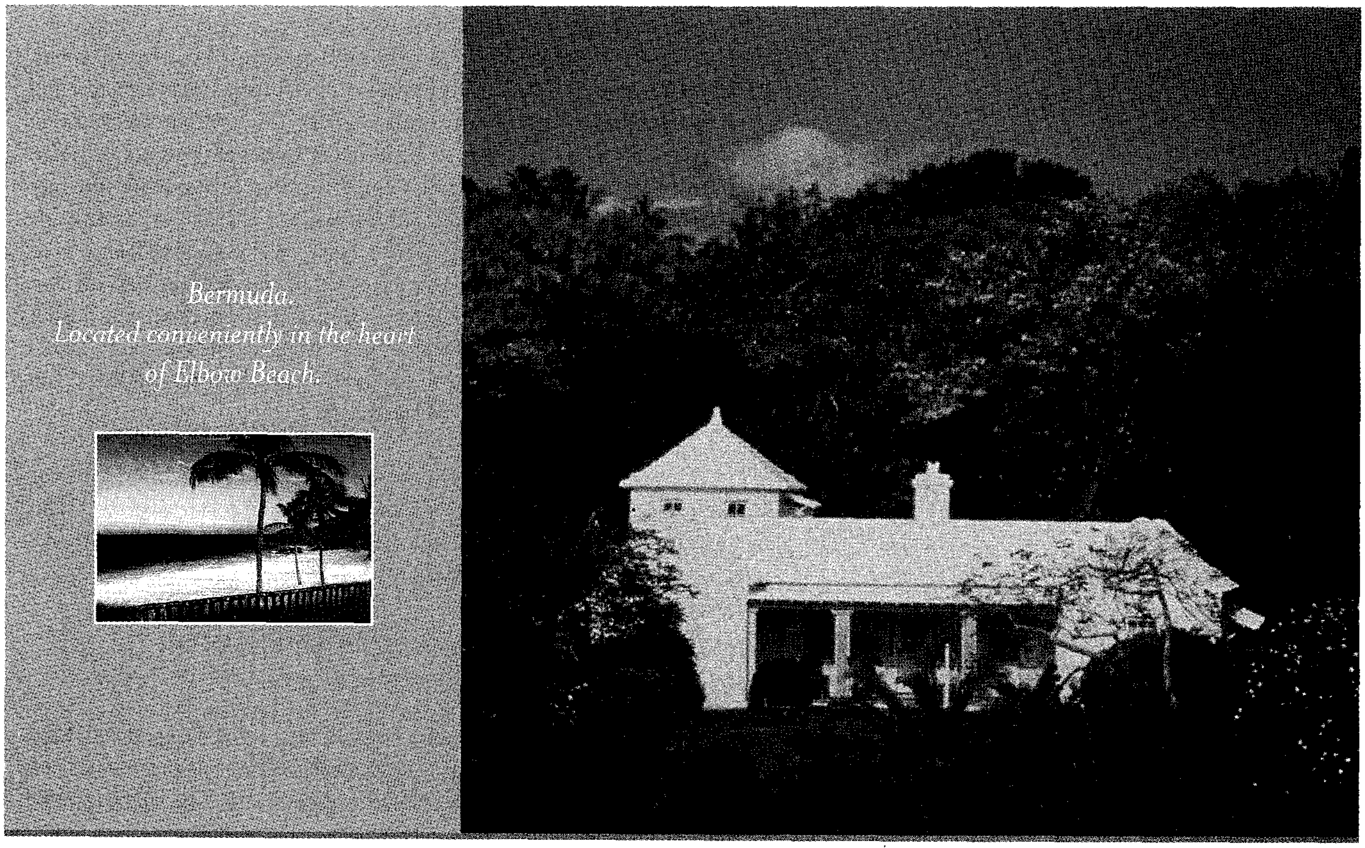

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which has a pueblo-like structure as brilliantly hued as the sky and sea, an exclusive marina, and a Robert Trent Jones golf course. But slightly more private is the smaller, elegant Hotel Pitrizzi.

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean, the key to paradise is finding an island with coves, beaches, and mountain villages that are far removed from the crowds. Ronnie Liadis, who visited Greece often as a child and now arranges travel there (greeceexperts.com), claims to have found it all on Zakynthos, off the west coast of the Peloponnese. Of her last trip there, in May, she recalls a visit to deserted Navagio beach, where its namesake shipwreck lies in the crystalline water. Zakynthos also lures, she says, with spectacular restaurants in the little villages, other sandy beaches you can get to only by boat, and vistas of sheer cliffs from winding mountain roads.

As executive chef at New York's Greek restaurant Molyvos, Jim Botsacos has travelled in Greece on numerous food quests and especially lauds the wineries on Santorini. But for his own most romantic getaway, he chose to stay on Crete at the magnificently private Elounda Mare. Here the honeymooners woke up to the sea right outside their beachside bungalow and could stroll out to their own garden and swimming pool. Forays to local restaurants enhanced the respite, Bostsacos recalls, with "friendly people and great cuisine."

For the Botsacoses, as for many European travellers, the island stay was the relaxing finale to rounds of sightseeing on the mainland. Two countries where this kind of combo is especially compelling are Croatia and Spain. In Croatia, visitors to the walled Renaissance city of Dubrovnik enjoy not only an unsurpassed sense of reliving history, but also views of the Adriatic so sparkling and blue as to pull the imagination out to sea. Venture up the coast to Split, where there is another architectural trove ripe for exploration and a ferry to the island of Hvar, which has its own Renaissance remains.

From Spain, the Balearics beckon—Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera. And there's nothing like visiting them by private yacht, especially with a guide to usher you to the inland villages, historic sites, and golden beaches that remain undisturbed. Heritage Tours, which specializes in trips to Spain, chose to work with a boatbuilder to design a six-cabin yacht, for one to twelve passengers, ideal for island touring. A one-week itinerary winds to the less-frequented parts of Mallorca such as La Cartuja de Valldemosa, the former Carthusian monastery, where George Sand lived with her lover Frédéric Chopin, as well as to quieter Menorca. With two weeks to spare, you can travel in style to Ibiza and Formentera too. Either way, it's an opportunity to cap off the sights of Madrid and Barcelona with a relaxing sojourn, one that allows you to sleep in your own sea-cradled cabin at night and awake to the islands' sunlit stories.

Island dreams likely shift with the seasons, beginning in winter with the Caribbean and the Pacific, moving to the Mediterranean in spring, and then in summer perhaps to northern Europe and Canada. Somewhere there's always a comfort zone waiting, lapped by water all around.

(Nao Hauser is a New York-based freelance writer.)

>> > NEWSLINE

JAMAICA—Barbadian coral-stone walls, French terra-cotta floors, landscaped Indonesian-style jungle gardens, ponds stocked with tropical fish, and ocean views where the Roaring River meets the Caribbean in St. Ann's Bay, help make the beachfront Roaring Pavilion Villa & Spa one of ***LaCURE's*** premier villas. FIJI—Through March 31st, ***Qantas Vacations*** offers a deluxe South Pacific experience at the five-star, eco-friendly Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort in the backwater port town of Savusavu on Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest island. Amenities include flight-seeing tours, gourmet meals, and four massages per person.

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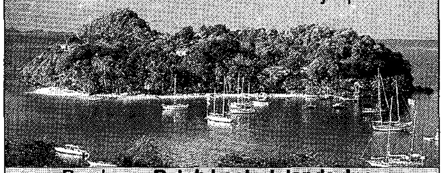
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ANNALS OF FINANCE

THE NEXT CRASH

Is the housing market a bubble that's about to burst?

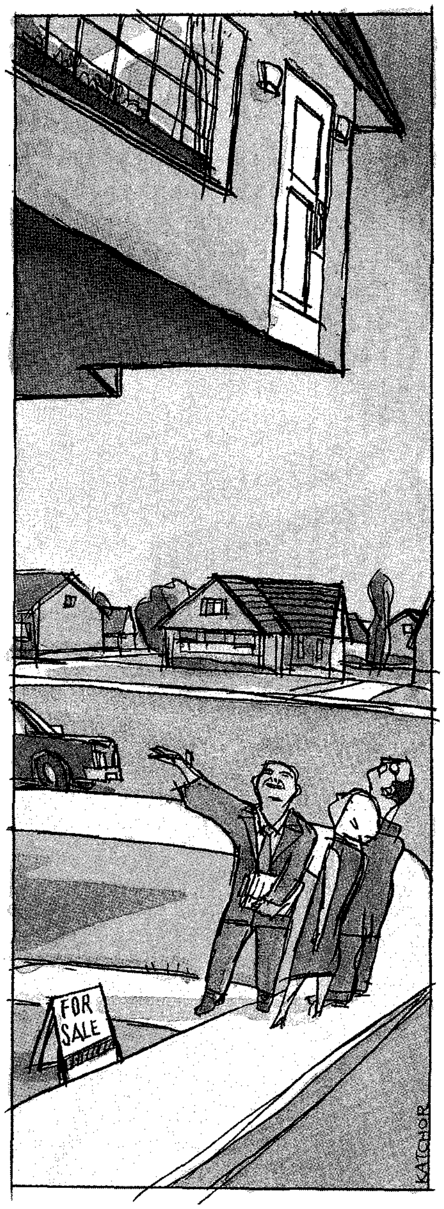
BY JOHN CASSIDY

On July 8, 1949, the Long Island *Star Journal* published a full-page ad for a community of affordable homes that the developer Levitt & Sons was building on a tract of farmland near Farmingdale, about twenty miles east of Queens. The ad featured an eight-hundred-square-foot ranch house on a sixty-by-one-hundred-foot plot. "This is Levittown! All yours for $58!" a month, the ad read. "Practically everything you can think of is included in that price. Refrigerator, range, Bendix, Venetian blinds, General Electric oil burner, legal fees, appraisal charges—yes, sir, the whole works are in." Prospective buyers could choose from five slightly different models, which were all priced at $7,990. If they were former G.I.s, as most were, the government guaranteed them a mortgage, with no down payment.

As recently as the summer of 2000, there were houses for sale in Levittown for under two hundred thousand dollars. After the Nasdaq crash of April, 2000, prices fell for several months in a row, and Richard Dallow, the owner of the Dallow Agency, one of Levittown's leading real-estate agents, thought that the long-predicted property slump had arrived. He had to reduce the price of one house from $199,000 to $189,000, and then to $179,999. It finally sold for $177,000. But in the fall of 2000 buyers returned to the market. To Dallow's surprise, prices kept rising right through the recession that began in March of last year, through the aftermath of 9/11, and through the first nine months of this year. "If we could buy that house for two hundred thousand dollars today, we'd grab it in an instant," he said. "Today, that same house would probably be in the two-hundred-and-seventy-five-thousand-dollar-to-three-hundred-thousand-dollar range, and it would go quickly."

BEN KATCHOR

Richard Dallow's family has been selling real estate in Levittown since 1951, when his father, Ted, moved there from Queens. Dallow has lived through several real-estate booms since joining the family business, in 1971, but the endurance of this one has stunned him. During the 1990-91 recession, house prices in Levittown fell by about a fifth, and they remained steady for several years. Dallow expected the current recession to cause a similar downward adjustment, but instead houses keep getting more expensive. "It has to impact at some point," he said. "But, then again, in the summer of 2000 I thought it was impacting, and then things came back."



One analyst warns that some housing prices could drop forty or fifty per cent.

By and large, the kinds of people buying houses in Levittown are the same as they have always been: cops, firefighters, janitors, retail workers, and others to whom fifty thousand dollars a year is a good salary. But now many of them have to apply for jumbo mortgages—loans of more than three hundred thousand dollars—which used to be reserved for the well-to-do. "Levittown has always been a low down-payment area," Dallow explained. "If the price is three hundred and thirty thousand and you put down five per cent, that's a mortgage of three hundred and thirteen thousand five hundred. You need a jumbo mortgage. For Levittown."

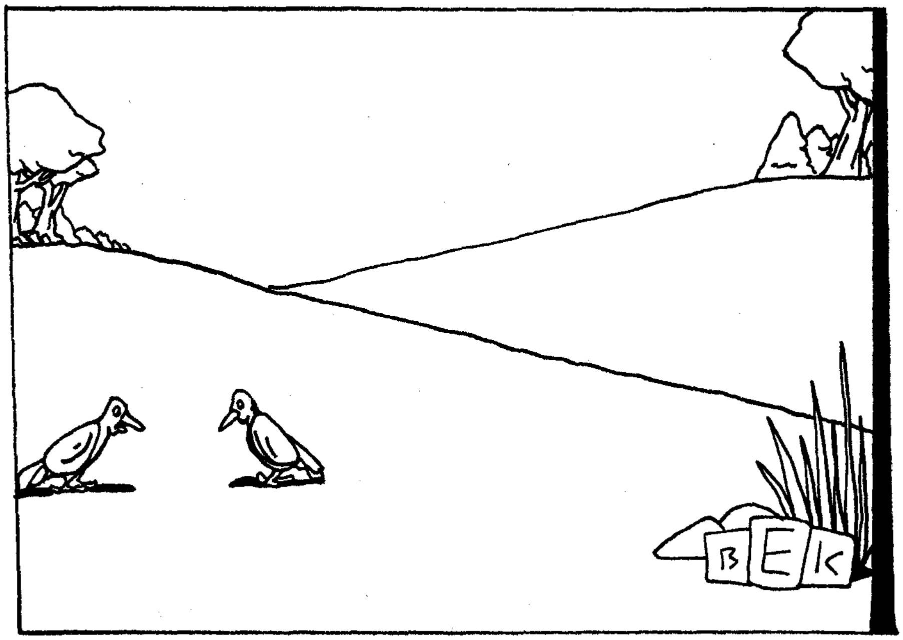
A few years ago, it became fashionable to deny what was, in retrospect, perfectly obvious: a speculative bubble had developed on Wall Street. Instead of warning investors to go easy, bullish analysts came up with increasingly outlandish justifications for stratospheric stock prices: the death of inflation; the rise of the Internet; a productivity "miracle"; the end of the business cycle; the aging of the baby boomers. Such rationalizations aren't heard much in connection with the stock market these days, but similar arguments are becoming prevalent in discussions of real estate. "The single-family housing market is not in a bubble, and I don't think it is susceptible to a bubble," said Frank Nothaft, the chief economist at Freddie Mac, one of two government-sponsored companies—the other is Fannie Mae—that provide mortgage financing to tens of millions of American families. "The economic fundamentals help to explain a lot of what we have seen with house prices in recent years." Nothaft ran through a list of these fundamentals: the mildness of the recession; low mortgage rates; the modest inventory of new homes; rising demand for housing from immigrants and "echo boomers"—boomers' children who are old enough to start families and buy a home. "We are not going to see the price of single-family homes fall," he insisted. "It ain't going to happen."

Many independent economists are also sanguine. Karl Case, a Wellesley economics professor who specializes in the real-estate market, reminded me that the average price of houses across the country has risen every single year since the Second World War. Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, has also dismissed comparisons between the real-estate market and the stock market. Speaking on Capitol Hill in July, he said that house prices reflected rising immigration and a shortage of building land. Of course, Greenspan has a vested interest in keeping the housing market humming. For the past eighteen months or so, he has been relying on the stimulative effects of the housing boom to offset a precipitate fall in business investment. If he succeeds in exploiting the buoyant housing market to prevent a "double dip" recession, it will be one of the great Houdini acts of economic policymaking.

Considering the way that Greenspan helped inflate the stock market during the late nineteen-nineties, by keeping interest rates artificially low and refusing to acknowledge the bubble, some homeowners might be tempted to put their properties on the market while they still can. In Levittown and elsewhere, many of them are doing just that. "They are saying we are never going to see prices like this again, and it's time to sell," Richard Dallow said. In Manhattan, where the average price of a two-bedroom apartment is now nine hundred and thirty-three thousand dollars, the number of properties for sale has risen sharply in the past couple of months, but would-be sellers may have missed the peak. In March, April, and May, the Corcoran Group, one of the city's largest real-estate agencies, enjoyed the best three months in its history. Since then, the volume of sales has fallen short of expectations, and prices have started to slip. "Anecdotally, I can say that certain apartments are not getting the prices that they did in the spring," Pamela Liebman, the president and C.E.O. of the Corcoran Group, confirmed.

The market is softening in other affluent areas as well, including parts of San Jose and the Dallas suburbs. This may be what Wall Street analysts used to call a "healthy correction," which doesn't spread to places like Levittown, but it could also mark the beginning of something much more serious. "In a real-estate crash, the top end of the market usually cracks first," Christopher Wood, a financial analyst at C.L.S.A. Emerging Markets, a brokerage and investment bank, warned. "Then the bad news cascades down." In 1989, at the peak of the last real-estate boom, Wood advised his New York friends to sell their apartments and rent for a year. He is issuing the same advice again. "The American housing market is the last big bubble," he said. "When it bursts, it will be very ugly. In places like Manhattan and San Francisco, prices could easily drop forty or fifty per cent."

Even Nothaft concedes that prices can't keep on rising vertiginously. Over the next few years, he predicts, they will gradually revert to their historic rates of increase: between four and five per cent per annum. The many Americans who view their houses as their most important and enduring store of wealth will be hoping fervently that Nothaft is right. However, his optimistic prognosis inevitably brings to mind the declamations of stock-market analysts like Abby Joseph Cohen and James K. Glassman. While the Dow and the Nasdaq were on the ascent, these seers regularly predicted a reversion to more modest gains at some point, but they dismissed the prospect of a severe and lasting downturn.

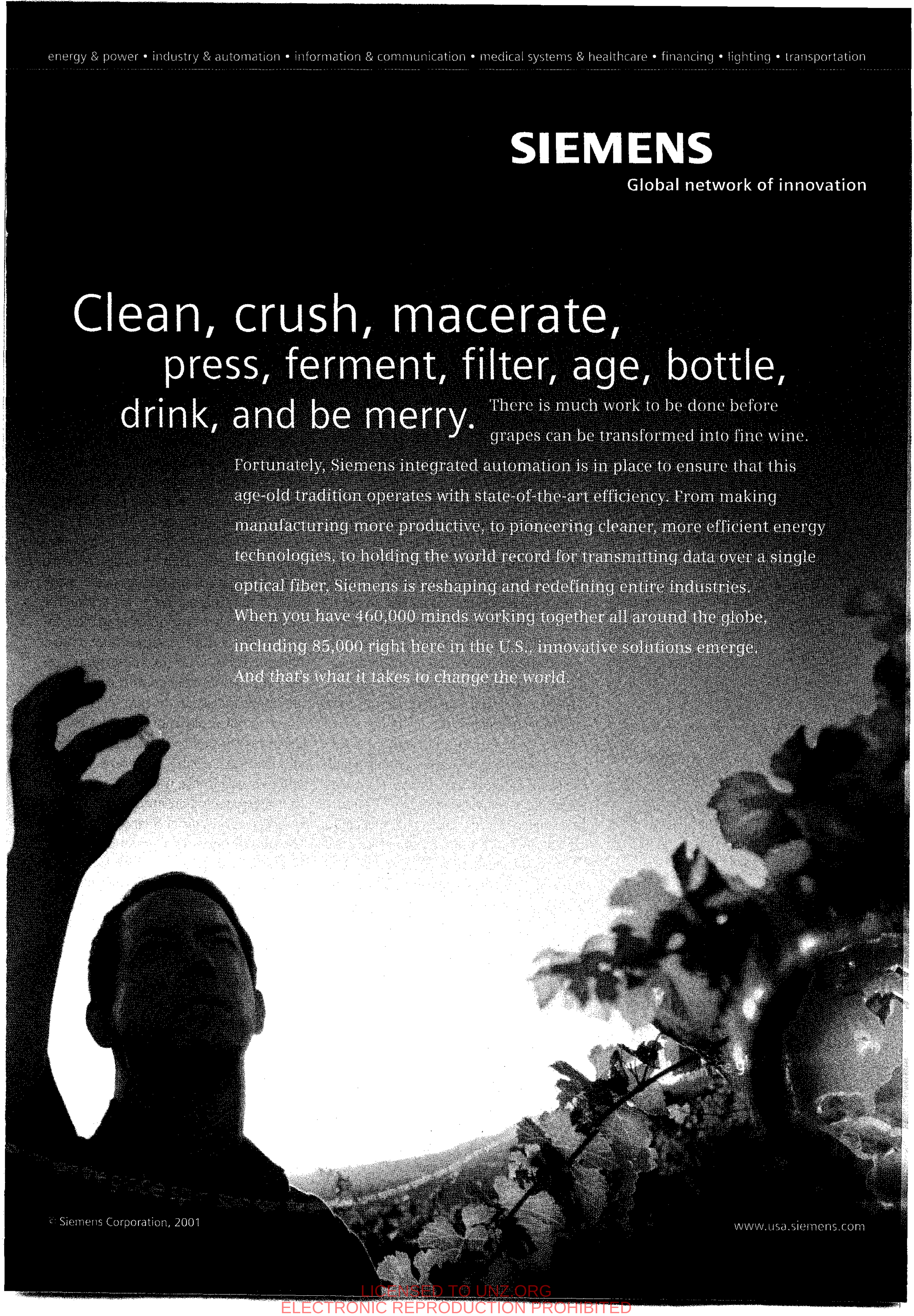


"You're only trying to migrate from yourself."

Unfortunately, there is no reliable way to determine how much houses are worth. Many factors come into play, including location, size, condition, interest rates, and the over-all state of the economy. In the end, the search for intrinsic value is doomed to failure: all assets are worth what somebody will pay for them. Twenty years ago, gold was worth seven hundred dollars an ounce; now its price is about three hundred dollars an ounce. In January, 2000, stock in Yahoo! was worth nearly five hundred dollars; now it is worth . . . well, no need to go into painful details.

Houses are less volatile than Internet stocks, but their prices vary greatly from time to time and place to place. Taking the United States as a whole, house prices have appreciated by almost forty per cent since 1997, which is the biggest jump in a five-year period since the late nineteen-seventies. Regionally, the pattern has been uneven. In San Francisco, house prices have risen by seventy-five per cent in the past five years; in Boston, they have virtually doubled; on Long Island, they have increased by about eighty per cent. Meanwhile, homeowners in other parts of the country, such as Mississippi, New Mexico, and West Virginia, have largely missed out.

If house prices are considered relative to income—a common method of assessing value—prices in the country as a whole are at their highest levels since the late nineteen-eighties. In San Francisco in 1989, for example, a typical house was selling for a price equal to three and a half times the average family income in the city. During the early nineteen-nineties,



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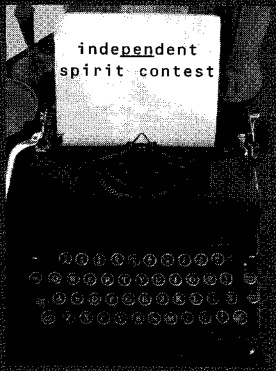

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the ratio of house prices to income fell, to two and a half. Last year, it moved back above three. In Boston, New York, and Washington, the pattern is similar. Meanwhile, the ratio of house prices to rents has risen to an all-time high. "Valuation looks quite extreme, and not just at the top end," Ian Morris, the chief United States economist at HSBC Bank, said. "Even normal mom-and-pop homes are now very expensive relative to income."

Of course, most people who buy or sell a home don't look at valuation ratios. Potential sellers look at what other homes in the area have fetched; potential buyers work out whether they can afford the monthly payments. Low interest rates and ready access to credit are the main things propelling the market. Last month, the fixed rate on a thirty-year mortgage dropped below six per cent for the first time since 1965.

Richard Dallow ran through the financial arithmetic facing a young couple who buy a home in Levittown for three hundred and forty thousand dollars. Assuming they put five per cent down, their monthly mortgage payments come to about two thousand dollars. Including property taxes and utilities, Dallow estimated the couple's total monthly housing costs at about three thousand dollars. This may sound like a lot of money for a city cop earning less than fifty thousand dollars a year, but the government subsidizes house buyers with a generous tax break on interest, and in most families there are two wage earners. "When I first started in the business, people could afford a house on one income," he said. "Today, the husband and the wife both work, and the husband generally works two jobs, just to make ends meet."

Developments in the financial industry have also made it easier for middle-class families to get big loans. Many real-estate agents now have an in-house mortgage broker who can go online and arrange a loan from any one of dozens of financial institutions. "That is one of the things that has changed drastically," Dallow said. "We get people approved within a few hours. Some of them don't even need approval. They come pre-approved." Twenty years ago, lenders used to set a strict limit of twenty-eight per cent of gross income for mortgage repayments. Today, they rely on software programs, which also take into account the borrower's credit rating, rental history, and other factors, and some homebuyers end up getting loans with monthly payments that are close to forty per cent of their income. As a result, mortgage-interest payments are consuming a record share of household income.

During the past decade, the Clinton and Bush Administrations have pursued the goal of increased homeownership by encouraging Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to expand their lending. "Owning something is freedom as far as I'm concerned," President Bush said recently. "It's part of a free society." Thanks to low interest rates and to Fannie and Freddie, sixty-eight out of every hundred American households now own their homes, but worthy policies can have unintended consequences. Cheap money and declining lending standards are often associated with speculative peaks, which invariably are followed by busts.

Whether they realize it or not, homeowners who burden themselves with hefty mortgages are taking a risk, especially if they might need to sell within the next few years. In the housing market, affordability is not the same thing as sustainable value. Current interest rates reflect the depressed state of the economy, and they can't last. In the next few months, the economy could improve, in which case the mortgage rate would rise considerably. Should it reach 8.5 per cent, which is where it was in the middle of 2000, the monthly payment on a mortgage of three hundred thousand dollars would rise by about five hundred dollars, and many potential buyers in places like Levittown would be priced out of the market. If, on the other hand, a double-dip recession materializes, mortgage rates may drop to 5.5 per cent, but unemployment will increase and many homeowners will be forced to put their homes on the market. At the moment, the jobless rate is only 5.6 per cent, well below its average level over the past thirty years, and most people are either employed or confident of finding work. But if unemployment rises sharply, as it does during most recessions, potential buyers will be too worried about their future to take on a big mortgage, and house prices will fall dramatically.

Realtors like to boast that property is much safer than the stock market, but that isn't always true. "Ultimately, the weaknesses that infect the stock market almost always catch up with the property market," HSBC's Ian Morris warns. After the stock-market crash of October, 1987, house prices rose for three years, but then dropped at the end of 1990. In Tokyo, where the biggest property bubble of the twentieth century took place during the nineteen-eighties, the stock market peaked in December, 1989. Real estate kept going up for another year, whereupon it collapsed.

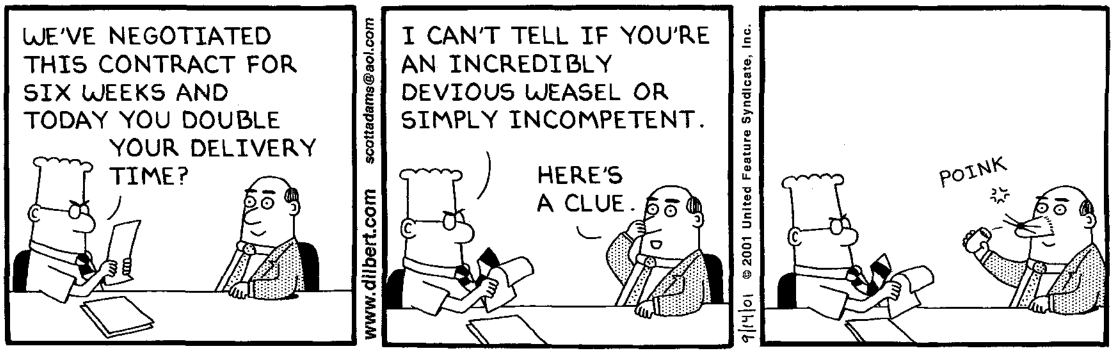
A homebuyer needs to ask not whether prices are rising currently but how much future buyers will be willing to pay when he or she wants to sell. Many people seem to have forgotten what happened after the property boom of the nineteen-eighties came to an end. Between 1989 and 1995, inflation-adjusted house prices in San Francisco and San Jose fell by almost forty per cent. In Honolulu, the downturn lasted a full decade: between the second quarter of 1991 and the first quarter of 2001, the real price of houses fell by almost a third. These cases are not atypical. In housing markets where speculative bubbles have developed, falls of thirty, forty, or fifty per cent are often needed to restore balance.

When inflation is running at five or ten per cent a year, housing can be made cheaper without prices having to fall much in absolute terms. Sellers keep their asking prices steady, and inflation gradually eats into them. This is what happened during the early nineties in many areas. Today, though, the option of invisible price cuts is no longer available, because inflation has virtually disappeared. (In September, the consumer price index was just 1.5 per cent above its September, 2001, level.) If house prices have to come down in order to restore sanity in the real-estate market, the falls will be out in the open, where everybody can see them.

If the housing market does crack, the ramifications for the rest of the economy are huge. Since the end of 2000, housing has been the biggest source of spending growth in the economy, both directly, through increased homebuilding, and indirectly, through the so-called "wealth effect." (When a family sees the value of its home rising, it is less apt to save for the future, because it is getting better off anyway.)

As anybody who has tried to hire a carpenter or a builder recently already knows, the country is in the midst of a construction boom. Every month, a hundred and fifty thousand new homes are being built, and in some areas land is getting scarce. The "teardown," once considered a California curiosity, is now a familiar sight in other places, such as the Hamptons and the North Shore of Long Island. When new homes are built, and when existing homes get more expensive, the country's stock of wealth increases. In the past seven years, about $2.6 trillion of housing wealth has been created, which translates to about thirty-five thousand dollars for every homeowner. This isn't nearly as much as the eight trillion dollars of stock-market wealth that has been eviscerated since

To err is human.
To cover it up is weasel.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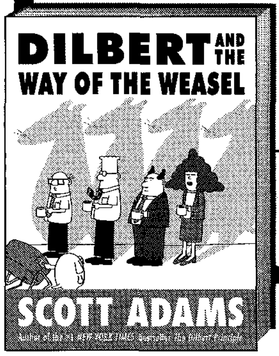
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the Nasdaq crash, but houses are distributed more equitably than stocks, which tend to gather in the portfolios of the already wealthy. Consequently, changes in house prices tend to have a bigger effect on spending patterns than changes in the stock market.

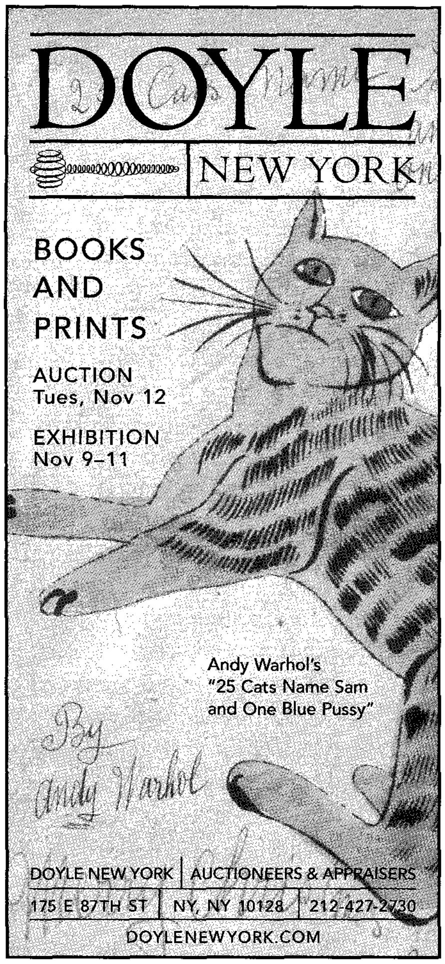
Many families have offset their losses in the stock market by refinancing their mortgages and taking out home-equity loans. During the past two and a half years, homeowners have raised more than three hundred and fifty billion dollars in this way, of which they have already spent more than a hundred billion, on S.U.V.s, furniture, and other consumer goods. In the words of *Fortune*, "The American home has become a virtual ATM." Should house prices start to fall, the cash machine would run out of money. Homeowners who bought at or near the top of the market would see the value of their homes fall below the value of their mortgages, a condition known as "negative equity," and they would try to rebuild their savings. In Japan, Britain, and Scandinavia, this process has in the past led to collapses in consumer spending, and the same thing could easily happen here. Businesses have already severely curtailed their expenditures. Were corporations and consumers to retrench simultaneously, there would be little that Alan Greenspan, or anybody else, could do to prevent a full-blown slump.

Homeowners wouldn't be the only ones to suffer in a property crash. In the past, the biggest victims were often banks that had extended dubious loans to house buyers and real-estate developers. During the past decade, however, the mortgage industry has changed almost beyond recognition, and banks now play a much smaller role. Today, when Citibank or J. P. Morgan Chase gives one of its customers a mortgage, it is usually acting as a broker. Once a bank has issued a home loan, it bundles it with thousands of others and sells it to investors, a process known as securitization. The investors receive the homebuyer's monthly payments; and if the homeowner defaults they suffer the consequences.

By far the biggest purchasers of residential mortgages are Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The two quasi-governmental enterprises are now among the biggest financial institutions in the country, with almost four trillion dollars in assets between them. Their remarkable growth has helped millions of Americans to purchase their first home, but it has also concentrated a great deal of risk in two enterprises that maintain a smaller capital cushion than regular banks. Fannie and Freddie both buy mortgages on which the borrower has put down as little as three per cent of the purchase price, and they're giving an increasing number of loans to people with suspect credit histories. Inevitably, concerns have arisen about what would happen to them if the housing market crashed. "They look O.K., but they are big, they are powerful, and they have systemic risk," Karl Case commented. "And it's not the kind of risk you can diversify around. You can't hedge real-estate values."

Frank Nothaft, Freddie Mac's chief economist, repudiated concerns about its financial stability. He reminded me that Fannie and Freddie have their own regulator, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, which is about to subject them to quarterly "stress tests," in which it simulates a sharp rise in interest rates and mortgage delinquencies over a ten-year period, and then checks whether they have enough capital to survive. So far, Fannie and Freddie have passed all the dry-run tests. "For a calamity to happen to Freddie Mac or Fannie Mae, you are talking about some economic scenario that is probably as severe as, if not worse than, the Great Depression," Nothaft said.

Not everybody is convinced by this argument. William Poole, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, recently warned that the sheer size of Fannie and Freddie could create a "massive problem in the credit markets." To pay for all the mortgages they buy, Fannie and Freddie issue bonds, which pay interest to their owners. What would happen, Poole asked, if the market value of these bonds fell sharply, because investors grew concerned about the financial soundness of Fannie and Freddie? "I do not know, and neither does anyone else," he said. Poole is hardly alone in expressing concern. A couple of months ago, Fannie's stock price sank after it announced that the recent wave of mortgage refinancings had adversely affected the balance it tries to maintain between its assets and its liabilities. (Fannie has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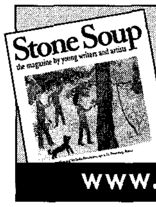
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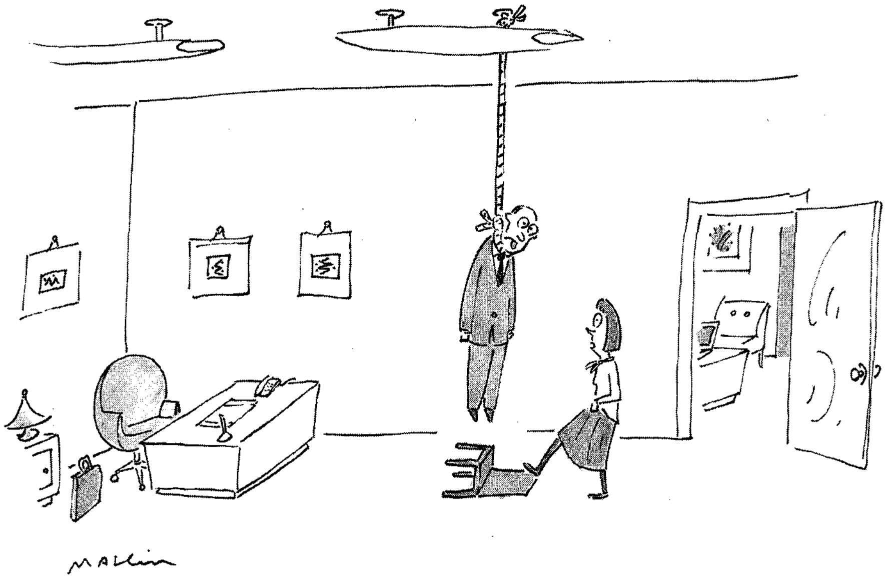

"Will there be anything else, sir?"

• •

since moved to restore the balance, and its stock price has recovered some of its losses.)

If Fannie or Freddie did get into serious trouble, the repercussions would dwarf the problems at Long-Term Capital Management in 1998, when buyers and sellers withdrew from the credit markets and the financial system almost seized up. That "liquidity crisis" prompted the Fed to organize a multibillion-dollar bailout, which a number of big Wall Street firms paid for. If Fannie and Freddie needed bailing out, taxpayers would probably end up paying for it. The federal government doesn't guarantee the survival of Fannie or Freddie, but it is unthinkable that it would let either of them fail. When it comes to housing, even the most ardent conservatives in Congress tend to forget their free-market principles.

In Levittown, the prospect of a real-estate crash still seems remote. A few weeks back, I took a tour of some properties for sale with Bruce Golub, a Realtor in the Dallow Agency, who had just come from a closing, at which a house sold for three hundred thousand dollars. Until a couple of years ago, Golub owned a bike shop in town, but a Target opened nearby, and he decided to go into the real-estate business. His first sale was for a hundred and sixty-three thousand dollars. Recently, he sold the same house again, this time for two hundred and seventy thousand dollars.

First, we visited an unmodernized Cape—something of a bargain at two hundred and fifty-nine thousand, but already under contract. Next, we saw a ranch that had been converted into a sprawling five-bedroom, with two separate wings. Its owners, who had moved to Florida, were asking three hundred and forty-nine thousand, and Golub was confident they would get it. Compared with the surrounding towns—Hicksville, Bethpage, Wantagh, East Meadow—Levittown is still relatively cheap. Compared with the North Shore of Long Island, where Golub lives, it is a bargain. "People are literally paying eight hundred thousand or a million for houses and tearing them down," he told me. "A small ranch sold on my block for eight hundred thousand. I'm driving down the street, I said, 'Where's it gone?' It wasn't there anymore. They are building a ten-thousand-square-foot home."

Like millions of Americans, the owners of that monstrosity are betting that bricks and mortar will continue to be the most secure and rewarding of all investments. If they turn the house into a home and live there for several decades, their gamble will probably pay off. But, if they are looking to make some quick and easy money, they may soon discover new meaning in the phrase "safe as houses." ♦

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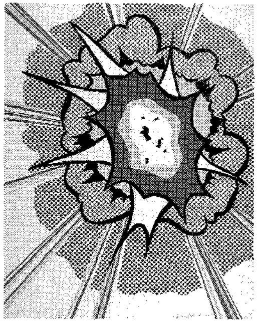

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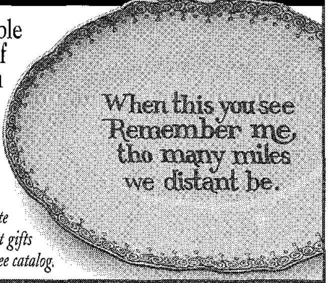

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DOGOLOGY

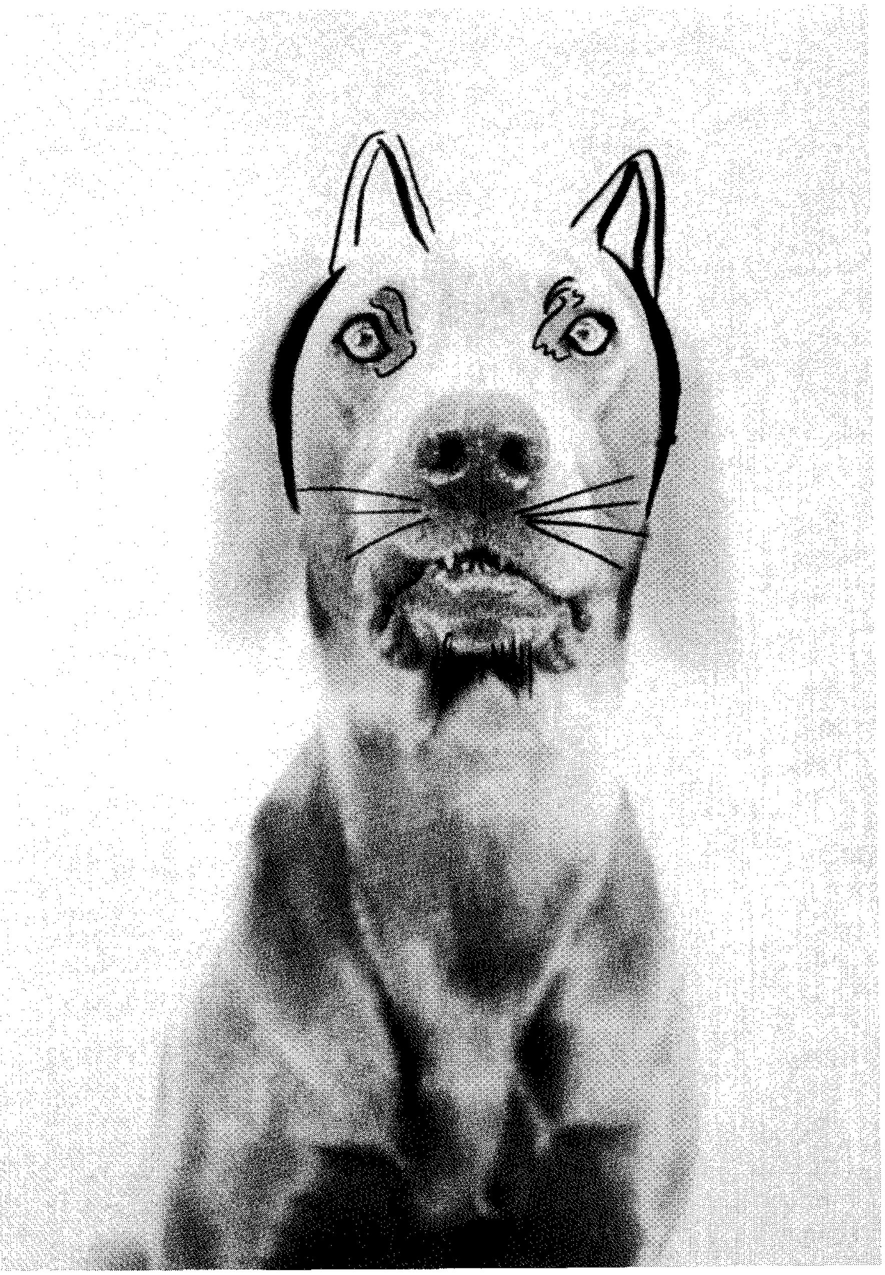
BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

RUMORS

It was the season of mud, drainpipes drooling, the gutters clogged with debris, a battered and penitential robin fixed like a statue on every lawn. Julian was up early, a Saturday morning, beating eggs with a whisk and gazing idly out the kitchen window and into the colorless hide of the day, expecting nothing, when all at once the scrim of rain parted to reveal a dark, crouching presence in the far corner of the yard. At first glance, he took it to be a dog—a town ordinance that he particularly detested disallowed fences higher than three feet, and so the contiguous lawns and flower beds of the neighborhood had become a sort of open savanna or roaming packs of dogs—but before the wind shifted and the needling rain closed in again he saw that he was wrong. This figure, partially obscured by the resurgent forsythia bush, seemed out of proportion, all limbs, as if a dog had been mated with a monkey. What was it, then? Raccoons had been at the trash lately, and he'd seen an opossum wavering down the street like a pale ghost one night after a dreary, overwrought movie Cara had insisted upon, but this was no opossum. Or raccoon, either. It was dark in color, whatever it was—a bear, maybe, a yearling strayed down from the high ridges along the river, and hadn't Ben Ober told him somebody on F Street had found a bear in their swimming pool? He put down the whisk and went to fetch his glasses.

A sudden eruption of thunder set the dishes rattling on the drainboard, followed by an uncertain flicker of light that illuminated the dark room as if the bulb in the overhead fixture had gone loose in the socket. He wondered how Cara could sleep through all this, but the wonder was short-lived, because he really didn't give a damn one way or the other if she slept all day, all night, all week. Better she should sleep and give him some peace. He was in the living room now, the gloom ladled over everything, shadows leeching into black holes behind the leather couch and matching armchairs, and the rubber plant a dark ladder in the corner. The thunder rolled again, the lightning flashed. His glasses were atop the TV, where he'd left them the night before while watching a sorry documentary about the children purportedly raised by wolves in India back in the nineteen-twenties, two stringy girls in sepia photographs that revealed little and could have been faked, in any case. He put his glasses on and padded back into the kitchen in his stocking feet, already having forgotten why he'd gone to get the glasses in the first place. Then he saw the whisk in a puddle of beaten egg on the counter, remembered, and peered out the window again.

The sight of the three dogs there—a pair of clownish chows and what looked to be a shepherd mix—did nothing but irritate him. He recognized this trio; they were the advance guard of the army of dogs that dropped their excrement all over the lawn, dug up his flower beds, and, when he tried to shoo them, looked right through him as if he didn't exist. It wasn't that he had anything against dogs, per se—it was their destructiveness he objected to, their arrogance, as if they owned the whole world and it was their privilege to do as they liked with it. He was about to step to the back door and chase them off, when the figure he'd first seen—the shadow beneath the forsythia bush—emerged. It was no animal, he realized with a shock, but a woman, a young woman dressed all in black, with her black hair hanging wet in her face and the clothes stuck to her like a second skin, down on all fours like a dog herself, sniffing. He was dumbfounded. As stunned and amazed as if someone had just stepped into the kitchen and slapped him till his head rolled back on his shoulders.



WILLIAM WEGMAN, "RAY CAT" (1978)

He'd been aware of the rumors—there was a new couple in the neighborhood, over on F Street, and the woman was a little strange, dashing through people's yards at any hour of the day or night, baying at the moon, and showing her teeth to anyone who got in her way—but he'd dismissed them as some sort of suburban legend. Now here she was, in his yard, violating his privacy, in the company of a pack of dogs he'd like to see shot—and their owners, too. He didn't know what to do. He was frozen in his own kitchen, the omelette pan sending up a metallic stink of incineration. And then the three dogs lifted their heads as if they'd heard something in the distance, the thunder boomed overhead, and suddenly they leaped the fence in tandem and were gone. The woman rose up out of the mud at this point—she was wearing a sodden turtleneck, jeans, a watch cap—locked eyes with him across the expanse of the rain-screened yard for just an instant, or maybe he was imagining this part of it, and then she turned and took the fence in a single bound, vanishing into the rain.

CYNOMORPH

Whatever it was they'd heard, it wasn't available to her, though she'd been trying to train her hearing away from the ceaseless clatter of the mechanical and tune it to the finer things, the wind stirring in the grass, the alarm call of a fallen nestling, the faintest sliver of a whimper from the dog three houses over, begging to be let out. And her nose. She'd made a point of sticking it in anything the dogs did, breathing deeply, rebooting the olfactory receptors of a brain that had been deadened by perfume and underarm deodorant and all the other stifling odors of civilization. Every smell was a discovery, and every dog discovered more of the world in ten minutes running loose than a human being would discover in ten years of sitting behind the wheel of a car or standing at the lunch counter in a deli or even hiking the Alps. What she was doing, or attempting to do, was nothing short of reordering her senses so that she could think like a dog and interpret the whole world—not just the human world—as dogs did.

Why? Because no one had ever done it before. Whole hordes wanted to be primatologists or climb into speedboats and study whales and dolphins or cruise the veldt in a Land Rover to watch the lions suckle their young beneath the baobabs, but none of them gave a second thought to dogs. Dogs were beneath them. Dogs were common, pedestrian, no more exotic than the housefly or the Norway rat. Well, she was going to change all that. Or at least that was what she'd told herself after the graduate committee rejected her thesis, but that was a long time ago now, two years and more—and the door was rapidly closing.

But here she was, moving again, and movement was good, it was her essence: up over the fence and into the next yard, dodging a clothesline, a cooking grill, a plastic trike, a sandbox, reminding herself always to keep her head down and go quadrupedal whenever possible, because how else was she going to hear, smell, and see as the dogs did? Another fence, and there, at the far end of the yard, a shed, and the dense rust-colored tails of the chows wagging. The rain spat in her face, relentless. It had been coming down steadily most of the night, and now it seemed even heavier, as if it meant to drive her back indoors where she belonged. She was shivering—had been shivering for the past hour, shivering so hard she thought her teeth were coming loose—and as she ran, doubled over in a crouch, she pumped her knees and flapped her arms in an attempt to generate some heat.

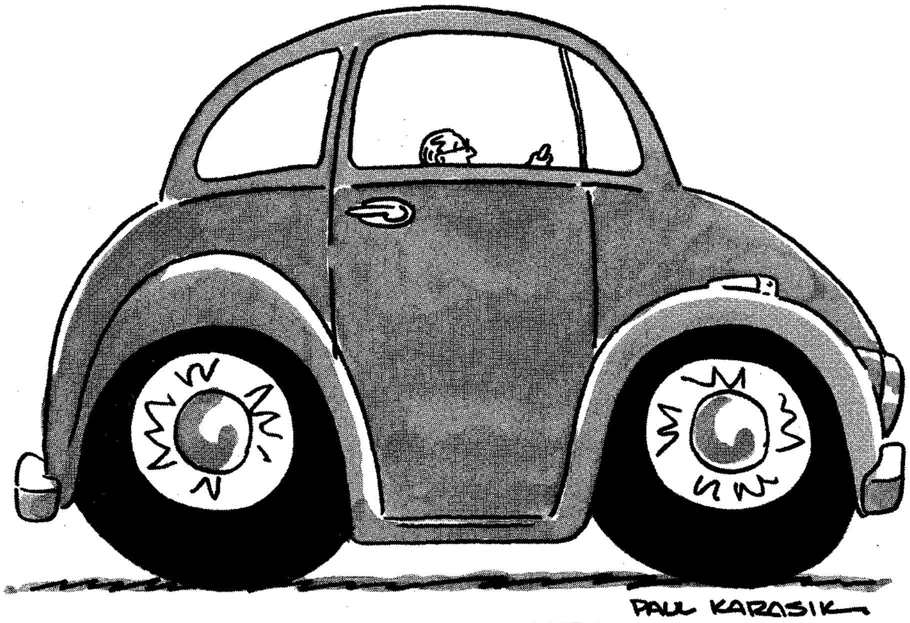
What were the dogs onto now? She

saw the one she called Barely disappear behind the shed and snake back out again, her tail rigid, sniffing now, barking, and suddenly they were all barking—the two chows and the semi-shepherd she'd named Factitious because he was such a sham, pretending he was a rover when he never strayed more than five blocks from his house, on E Street. There was a smell of freshly turned earth, of compost and wood ash, of the half-drowned worms that Snout the Afghan loved to gobble up off the pavement. She glanced toward the locked gray vault of the house, concerned that the noise would alert whoever lived there, but it was early yet, no lights on, no sign of activity. The dogs' bodies moiled. The barking went up a notch. She ran, hunched at the waist, hurrying.

And then, out of the corner of her eye, she caught a glimpse of A1, the big-shouldered husky who'd earned his name by consuming half a bottle of steak sauce beside an overturned trash can one bright January morning. He was running—but where had he come from? She hadn't seen him all night and assumed he'd been wandering out at the limits of his range, over in Bethel or Georgetown. She watched him streak across the yard, ears pinned back, head low, his path converging with hers until he disappeared behind the shed. Angling round the back of the thing—it was aluminum, one of those prefab articles they sell in the big warehouse stores—she found the compost pile her nose had alerted her to (good, good: she was improving) and a tower of old wicker chairs stacked up six feet high. A1 never hesitated. He surged in at the base of the tower, his jaws snapping, and the second chow, the one she called Decidedly, was right behind him—and then she saw: there was something there, a face with incendiary eyes, and it was growling for its life in a thin continuous whine that might have been the drone of a model airplane buzzing overhead.

What was it? She crouched low, came in close. A straggler appeared suddenly, a fluid sifting from the blind side of the back fence to the yard—it was Snout, gangly, goofy, the fastest dog in the neighborhood and the widest ranger, A1's wife and the mother of his dispersed pups. And then all five dogs went in for the kill.

The thunder rolled again, concentrating the moment, and she got her first clear look: cream-colored fur, naked pink toes, a flash of teeth and burdened gums. It was an opossum, unlucky, doomed, caught out while creeping back to its nest on soft marsupial feet after a night of foraging among the trash cans. There was a roil of dogs, no barking now, just the persistent unravelling growls that were like curses, and the first splintering crunch of bone. The tower of wicker came down with a clatter, chairs upended and scattered, and the dogs hardly noticed. She glanced around her in alarm, but there was nobody to be seen, nothing moving but the million silver drill bits of the rain boring into the ground. Just as the next flash of lightning lit the sky, A1 backed out from under the tumble of chairs with the carcass clenched in his jaws, furiously shaking it to snap a neck that was already two or three times broken, and she was startled to see how big the thing was—twenty pounds of meat, gristle, bone, and hair, twenty pounds at least. He shook it again, then dropped it at his wife's feet as an offering. It lay still, the other dogs extending their snouts to sniff at it dispassionately, scientists themselves, studying and measuring, remembering. And, when the hairless pink young emerged from the pouch, she tried not to feel anything as the dogs snapped them up one by one.



S.U.V.W.

CARA

"You mean you didn't confront her?" Cara was in her royal-purple robe—her "wrapper," as she insisted on calling it, as if they were at a country manor in the Cotswolds entertaining Lord and Lady Muckbright instead of in a tract house in suburban Connecticut—and she'd paused with a forkful of mushroom omelette halfway to her mouth. She was on her third cup of coffee and wearing her combative look.

"Confront her? I barely had time to recognize she was human." He was at the sink, scrubbing the omelette pan, and he paused to look bitterly out into the gray vacancy of the yard. "What did you expect me to do, chase her down? Make a citizen's arrest? What?"

The sound of Cara buttering her toast—she might have been flaying the flesh from a bone—set his teeth on edge. "I don't know," she said, "but we can't just have strangers lurking around anytime they feel like it, can we? I mean, there are *laws*—"

"The way you talk you'd think I invited her. You think I like mental cases peeping in the window so I can't even have a moment's peace in my own house?"

"So do something."

"What? You tell me."

"Call the police, why don't you? That should be obvious, shouldn't it? And that's another thing—"

That was when the telephone rang. It

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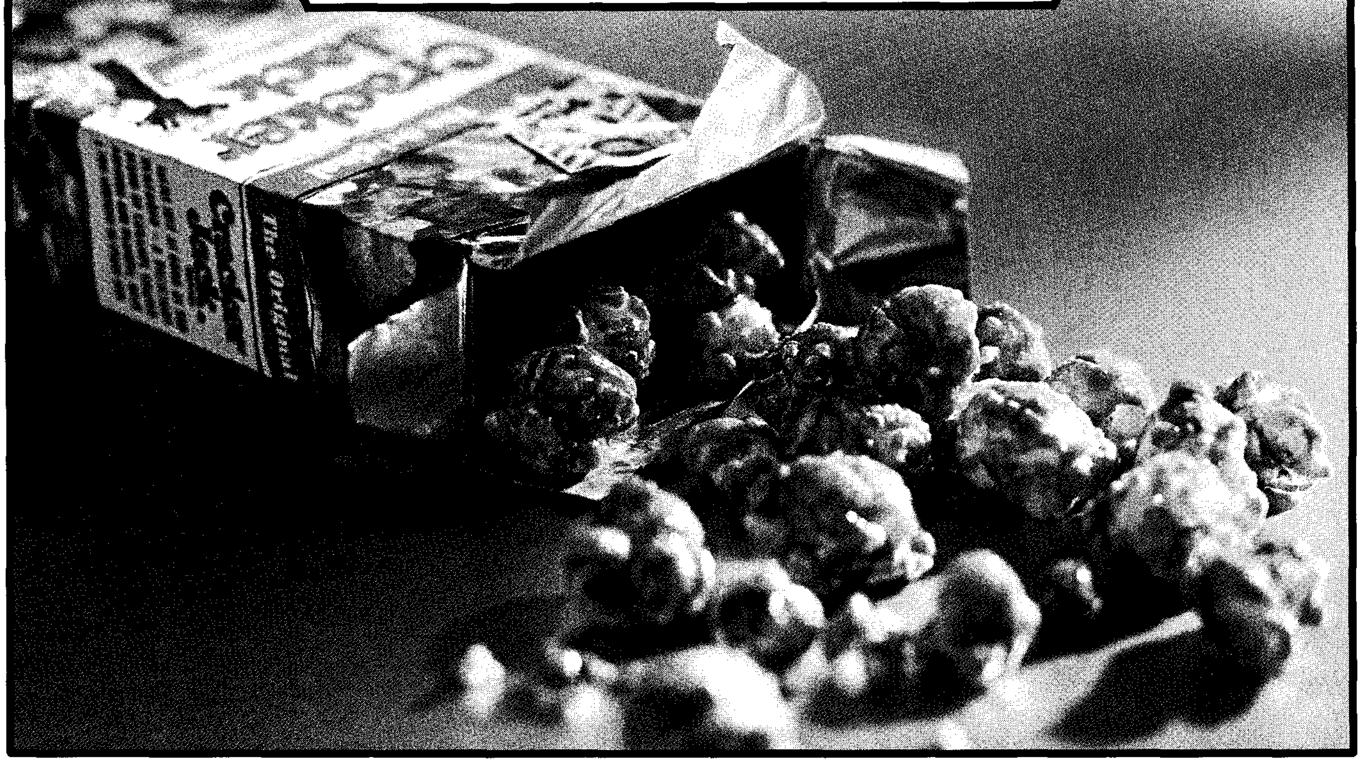

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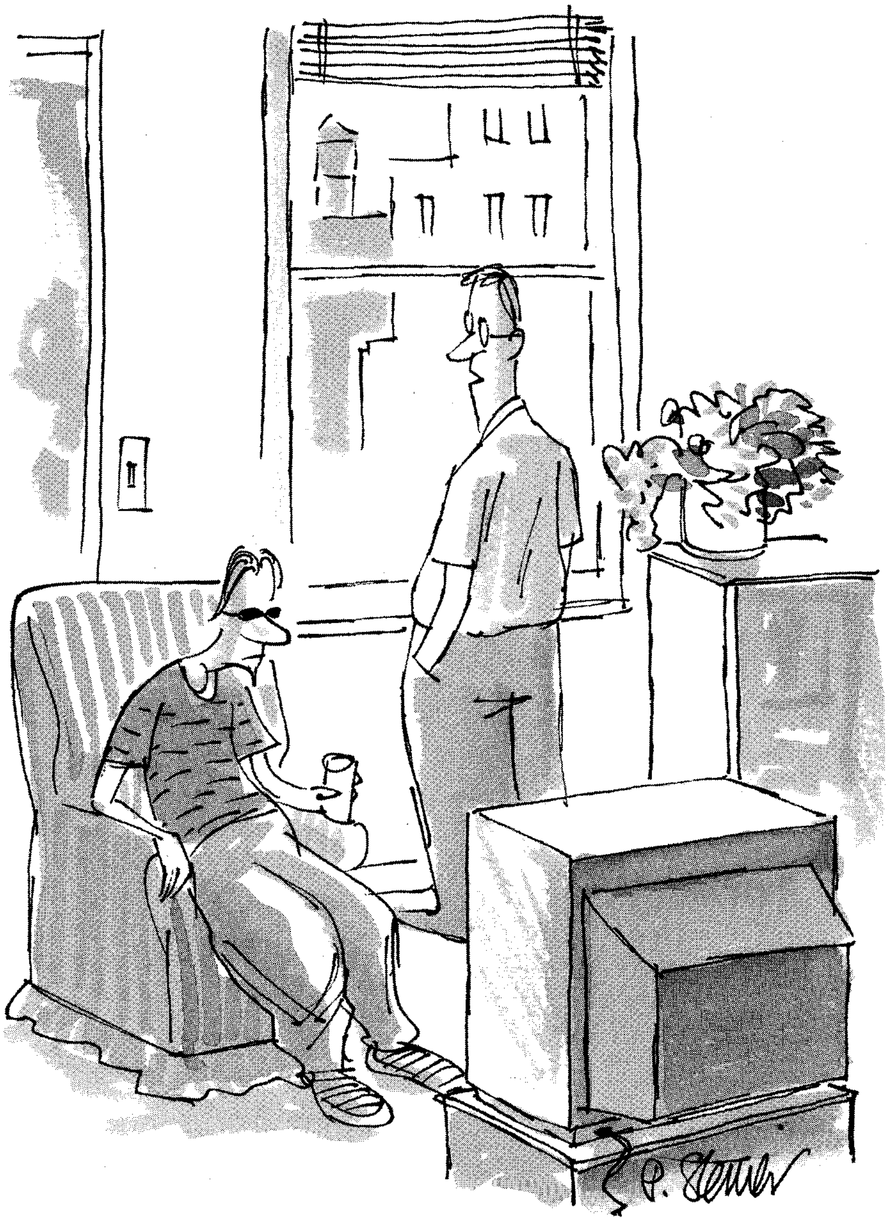

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• •

was Ben Ober, his voice scraping through the wires like a set of hard chitinous claws scrabbling against the side of the house. "Julian?" he shouted. "Julian?"

Julian reassured him. "Yeah," he said, "it's me. I'm here."

"Can you hear me?"

"I can hear you."

"Listen, she's out in my yard right now, out behind the shed with a, I don't know, some kind of wolf, it looks like, and that Afghan nobody seems to know who's the owner of—"

"Who?" he said, but even as he said it he knew. "Who're you talking about?"

"The dog woman." There was a pause, and Julian could hear him breathing into the mouthpiece as if he were deep underwater. "She seems to be—I think she's killing something out there."

THE WOLF CHILDREN OF MAYURBHANJ

It was high summer, just before the rains set in, and the bush had shrivelled back under the sun till you could see up the skirts of the sal trees, and all that had been hidden was revealed. People began to talk of a disturbing presence in the jungle outside the tiny village of Godamuri in Mayurbhanj district, of a *bhut*, or spirit, sent to punish them for their refusal to honor the authority of the maharaja. This thing had twice been seen in the company of a wolf, a vague pale slash of movement in the incrassating twilight, but it was no wolf itself, of that the eyewitnesses were certain. Then came the rumor that there were two of them, quick, nasty, bloodless things of the night, and that their eyes flamed with an infernal heat that incinerated anyone who looked into them, and panic gripped the countryside. Mothers kept their children close, fires burned in the night. Then, finally, came the news that these things were concrete and actual and no mere figments of the imagination: their den had been found in an abandoned termitarium in the dense jungle seven miles southeast of the village.

The rumors reached the Reverend J. A. L. Singh, of the Anglican mission and orphanage at Midnapore, and in September, after the monsoon clouds had peeled back from the skies and the rivers had receded, he made the long journey to Godamuri by bullock cart. One of his converts, a Kora tribesman by the name of Chunarem, who was prominent in the area, led him to the site. There, the Reverend, an astute and observant man and an amateur hunter acquainted with the habits of beasts, saw evidence of canine occupation of the termite mound—droppings, bones, tunnels of ingress and egress—and instructed that a machan be built in an overspreading tree. Armed with his dependable 20-bore Westley Richards rifle, the Reverend sat breathlessly in the machan and concentrated his field glasses on the main entrance to the den. The Reverend Singh was not one to believe in ghosts, other than the Holy Spirit, perhaps, and he expected nothing more remarkable than an albino wolf or perhaps a sloth bear gone white with age or dietary deficiency.

Dusk filtered up from the forest floor. Shadows pooled in the undergrowth, and then an early moon rose up pregnant from the horizon to soften them. Langurs whooped in the near distance, cicadas buzzed, a hundred species of beetles, moths, and biting insects flapped round the Reverend's ears, but

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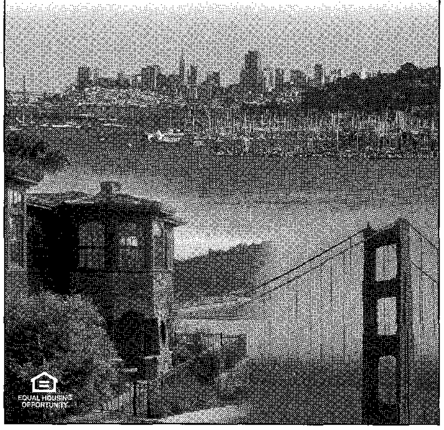

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he held rigid and silent, his binoculars fixed on the entrance to the mound. And then suddenly a shape emerged, the triangular head of a wolf, then a smaller canine head, and then something else altogether, with a neatly rounded cranium and foreshortened face. The wolf—the dam—stretched herself and slunk off into the undergrowth, followed by a pair of wolf cubs and two other creatures, which were too long-legged and rangy to be canids; that was clear at a glance. Monkeys, the Reverend thought at first, or apes of some sort. But then, even though they were moving swiftly on all fours, the Reverend could see, to his amazement, that these weren't monkeys at all, or wolves or ghosts, either.

DENNING

She no longer bothered with a notepad or the pocket tape recorder she'd once used to document the telling yip or strident howl. These were the accoutrements of civilization, and civilization got in the way of the kind of freedom she required if she was ever going to break loose of the constraints that had shackled field biologists from the beginning. Even her clothes seemed to get in the way, but she was sensible enough of the laws of the community to understand that they were necessary, at least for now. Still, she made a point of wearing the same things continuously for weeks on end—sans underwear or socks—in the expectation that her scent would invest them, and the scent of the pack, too. How could she hope to gain their confidence if she smelled like the prize inside a box of detergent?

One afternoon toward the end of March, as she lay stretched out beneath a weak pale disk of a sun, trying to ignore the cold breeze and concentrate on the doings of the pack—they were excavating a den in the vacant quadrangle of former dairy pasture that was soon to become the J and K blocks of the ever-expanding development—she heard a car slow on the street a hundred yards distant and lifted her head lazily, as the dogs did, to investigate. It had been a quiet morning and a quieter afternoon, with A1 and Snout, as the alpha couple, looking on placidly as Decidedly, Barely, and Factitious alternated the digging and a bulldog from B Street she hadn't yet named lay drooling in the dark wet earth that flew from the lip of the burrow. Snout had been chasing cars off and on all morning—to the dogs, automobiles were animate and ungovernable, big unruly ungulates that needed to be curtailed—and she guessed that the fortyish man climbing out of the sedan and working his tentative way across the lot had come to complain, because that was all her neighbors ever did: complain.

And that was a shame. She really didn't feel like getting into all that right now—explaining herself, defending the dogs, justifying, forever justifying—because for once she'd got into the rhythm of dogdom, found her way to that sacred place where to lie flat in the sun and breathe in the scents of fresh earth, dung, sprouting grass was enough of an accomplishment for a day. Children were in school, adults at work. Peace reigned over the neighborhood. For the dogs—and for her, too—this was bliss. Hominids had to keep busy, make a buck, put two sticks together, order and structure and *complain*, but canids could know contentment, and so could she, if she could only penetrate deep enough.

Two shoes had arrived now. Loafers, buffed to brilliance and decorated with matching tassels of stripped hide. They'd come to rest on a trampled mound of fresh earth no more than twenty-four inches from her nose. She tried to ignore them, but there was a bright smear of mud or excrement gleaming on the toe of the left one; it *was* excrement, dog—the merest sniff told her that, and she was intrigued despite herself, though she refused to lift her eyes. And then a man's voice was speaking from somewhere high above the shoes, so high up and resonant with authority it might have been the voice of the alpha dog of all alpha dogs—God himself.

The tone of the voice, but not the sense of it, appealed to the dogs, and the bulldog, who was present and accounted for because Snout was in heat, hence the den, ambled over to gaze up at the trousered legs in lovesick awe. "You know," the voice was saying, "you've really got the neighborhood in an uproar, and I'm sure you have your reasons, and I know these dogs aren't yours—" The voice faltered. "But Ben Ober—you know Ben Ober? Over on C Street? Well, he's claiming you're killing rabbits or something. Or you were. Last Saturday. Out on his lawn?" Another pause. "Remember, it was raining?"

A month back, two weeks ago, even, she would have felt obliged to explain herself, would have soothed and mollified and dredged up a battery of behavioral terms—proximate causation, copulation solicitation, naturalistic fallacy—to cow him, but today, under the pale sun, in the company of the pack, she just couldn't seem to muster the energy. She might have grunted—or maybe that was only the sound of her stomach rumbling. She couldn't remember when she'd eaten last.

The cuffs of the man's trousers were stiffly pressed into jutting cotton prows, perfectly aligned. The bulldog began to lick at first one, then the other. There was the faintest creak of tendon and patella, and two knees presented themselves, and then a fist, pressed to the earth for balance. She saw a crisp white strip of shirt cuff, the gold flash of watch and wedding band.

"Listen," he said, "I don't mean to stick my nose in where it's not wanted, and I'm sure you have your reasons for, for"—the knuckles retrenched to balance the movement of his upper body, a swing of the arm, perhaps, or a jerk of the head—"all this. I'd just say live and let live, but I can't. And you know why not?"

She didn't answer, though she was on the verge—there was something about his voice that was magnetic, as if it could adhere to her and pull her to her feet again—but the bulldog distracted her. He'd gone up on his hind legs with a look of unfocussed joy and begun humping the man's leg, and her flash of epiphany deafened her to what he was saying. The bulldog had revealed his name to her: from now on she would know him as Humper.

"Because you upset my wife. You were out in our yard and I, she— Oh, Christ," he said, "I'm going about this all wrong. Look, let me introduce myself—I'm Julian Fox. We live on B Street, 2236? We never got to meet your husband and you when you moved in. I mean, the development's got so big—and impersonal, I guess—we never had the chance. But if you ever want to stop by, maybe for tea, a drink—the two of you, I mean—that would be, well, that would be great."

A DRINK ON B STREET

She was upright and smiling, though her posture was terrible and she carried her own smell with her into the sterile sanctum of the house. He caught it immediately, unmistakably, and so did Cara, judging from the look on her face as she took the girl's hand. It was as if a breeze had wafted up from the bog they were draining over on G Street to make way for the tennis courts; the door stood open, and here was a raw infusion of the wild. Or the kennel. That was Cara's take on it, delivered in a stage whisper on the far side of the swinging doors to the kitchen as she fussed with the hors d'œuvres and he poured vodka for the husband and tap water for the girl: *She smells like she's been sleeping in a kennel.* When he handed her the glass, he saw that there was dirt under her nails. Her hair shone with grease and there were bits of fluff or lint or something flecking the coils of it where it lay massed on her shoulders. Cara tried to draw her into small talk, but she wouldn't draw—she just kept nodding and smiling till the smile had nothing of greeting or joy left in it.

Cara had got their number from Bea Chiavone, who knew more about the business of her neighbors than a confessor, and one night last week she'd got through to the husband, who said his wife was out—which came as no surprise—but Cara had kept him on the line for a good ten minutes, digging for all she was worth, until he finally accepted the invitation to their "little cocktail party." Julian was doubtful, but

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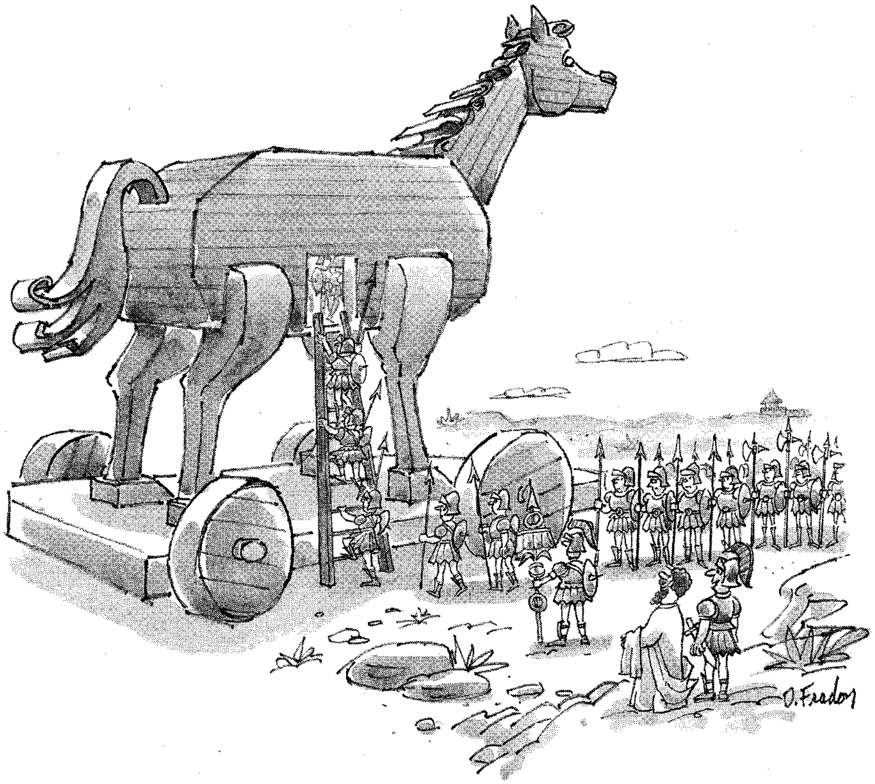
before he'd had a chance to comb his hair or get his jacket on, the bell was ringing and there they were, the two of them, arm in arm on the doormat, half an hour early.

The husband, Don, was acceptable enough. Early thirties, bit of a paunch, his hair gone in a tonsure. He was a computer engineer. Worked for I.B.M. "Really?" Julian said. "Well, you must know Charlie Hsiu, then—he's at the Yorktown office?"

Don gave him a blank look.

"He lives just up the street. I mean, I could give him a call, if, if—" He never finished the thought. Cara had gone to the door to greet Ben and Julie Ober, and the girl, left alone, had migrated to the corner by the rubber plant, where she seemed to be bent over now, sniffing at the potting soil. He tried not to stare—tried to hold the husband's eye and absorb what he was saying about interoffice politics and his own role on the research end of things ("I guess I'm what you'd call the ultimate computer geek, never really get away from the monitor long enough to put a name to a face")—but he couldn't help stealing a glance under cover of the Obers' entrance. Ben was glad-handing, his voice booming, Cara was cooing something to Julie, and the girl (the husband had introduced her as Cynthia, but she'd murmured, "Call me C.f., capital 'C,' lowercase 'f,' ") had gone down on her knees beside the plant. He saw her wet a finger, dip it into the soil, and bring it to her mouth.

While the La Portes—Cara's friends, dull as woodchips—came smirking through the door, expecting a freak show, Julian tipped back his glass and crossed the room to the girl. She was intent on the plant, rotating the terra-cotta pot to examine the saucer beneath it, on all fours now, her face close to the carpet. He cleared his throat, but she didn't respond. He watched the back of her head a moment, struck by the way her hair curtained her face and spilled down the rigid struts of her arms. She was dressed all in black, in a ribbed turtleneck, grass-stained jeans, and a pair of canvas sneakers that were worn through at the heels. She wasn't wearing socks, or, as far as he could see, a brassiere, either. But she'd clean up nicely, that was what he was thinking—she had a shape to her, anybody could see that, and eyes that could burn holes right through you. "So," he heard himself say, even as Ben's voice rose to a crescendo at the other end of the room, "you, uh, like houseplants?"



"Special Forces."

She made no effort to hide what she was doing, whatever it may have been—studying the weave of the carpet, looking at the alignment of the baseboard, inspecting for termites, who could say?—but instead turned to gaze up at him for the first time. "I hope you don't mind my asking," she said in her hush of a voice, "but did you ever have a dog here?"

He stood looking down at her, gripping his drink, feeling awkward and foolish in his own house. He was thinking of Seymour (or "See More," because as a pup he was always running off after things in the distance), picturing him now for the first time in how many years? Something passed through him then, a pang of regret carried in his blood, in his neurons: Seymour. He'd almost succeeded in forgetting him. "Yes," he said. "How did you know?"

She smiled. She was leaning back against the wall now, cradling her knees in the net of her interwoven fingers. "I've been training myself. My senses, I mean." She paused, still smiling up at him. "Did you know that when the Ninemile wolves came down into Montana from Alberta they were following scent trails laid down years before? Think about it. All that weather, the seasons, trees falling and decaying. Can you imagine that?"

"Cara's allergic," he said. "I mean, that's why we had to get rid of him. Seymour. His name was Seymour."

There was a long braying burst of laughter from Ben Ober, who had an arm round Don's shoulder and was painting something in the air with a stiffened forefinger. Cara stood just beyond him, with the La Portes, her face glowing as if it had been basted. Celia La Porte looked from him to the girl and back again, then arched her eyebrows wittily and raised her long-stemmed glass of Viognier, as if toasting him. All three of them burst into laughter. Julian turned his back.

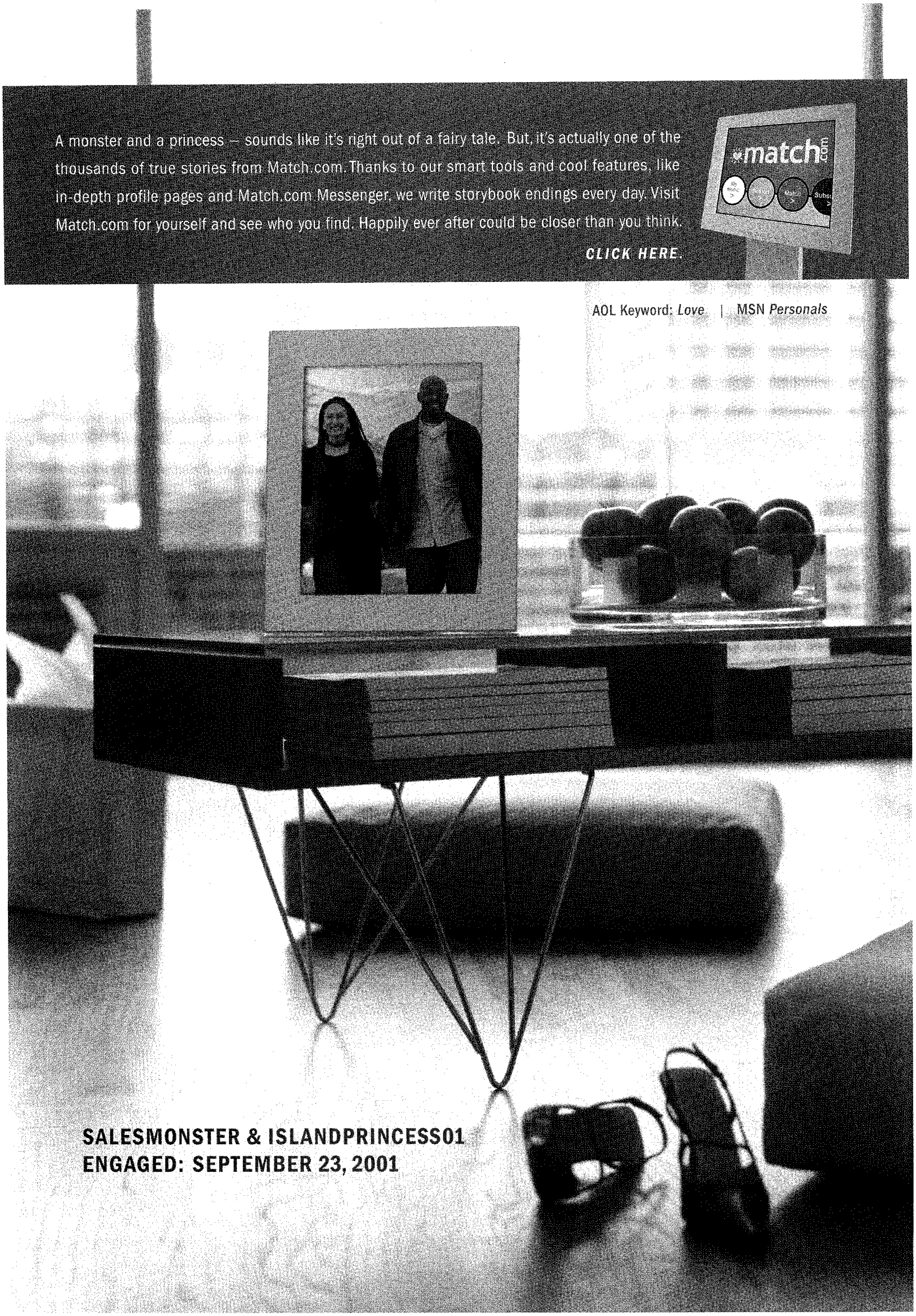
"You didn't take him to the pound—did you?" The girl's eyes went flat. "Because that's a death sentence, I hope you realize that."

"Cara found a home for him."

They both looked to Cara then, her shining face, her anchorwoman's hair. "I'm sure," the girl said.

"No, really. She did."

The girl shrugged, looked away from



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him. "It doesn't matter," she said with a flare of anger. "Dogs are just slaves, anyway."

KAMALA AND AMALA

The Reverend Singh had wanted to return to the site the following afternoon and excavate the den, convinced that these furtive night creatures were in fact human children, children abducted from their cradles and living under the dominion of beasts—unbaptized and unsaved, their eternal souls at risk—but urgent business called him away to the south. When he returned, late in the evening, ten days later, he sat over a dinner of cooked vegetables, rice, and dal, and listened as Chunarem told him of the wolf bitch that had haunted the village two years back, after her pups had been removed from a den in the forest and sold for a few annas apiece at the Khuar market. She could be seen as dusk fell, her dugs swollen and glistening with extruded milk, her eyes shining with an unearthly blue light against the backdrop of the forest. People threw stones, but she never flinched. And she howled all night from the fringes of the village, howled so that it seemed she was inside the walls of every hut simultaneously, crooning her sorrow into the ears of each sleeping villager. The village dogs kept hard by, and those that didn't were found in the morning, their throats torn out. "It was she," the Reverend exclaimed, setting down his plate as the candles guttered and moths beat at the netting. "She was the abductress—it's as plain as morning."

A few days later, he got up a party that included several railway men and returned to the termite mound, bent on rescue. In place of the rifle, he carried a stout cudgel cut from a mahua branch. He brought along a weighted net as well. The sun hung overhead. All was still. And then the hired beaters started in, the noise of them racketing through the trees, coming closer and closer until they converged on the site, driving hares and bandicoot rats and the occasional gaur before them. The railway men tensed in the machan, their rifles trained on the entrance to the burrow, while Reverend Singh stood by with a party of diggers to effect the rescue when the time came. It was unlikely that the wolves would have been abroad in daylight, and so it was no surprise to the Reverend that no large animal was seen to run before the beaters and seek the shelter of the den. "Very well," he said, giving the signal, "I am satisfied. Commence the digging."

As soon as the blades of the first shovels struck the mound, a protracted snarling could be heard emanating from the depths of the burrow. After a few minutes of the tribesmen's digging, the she-wolf sprang out at them, ears flattened to her head, teeth flashing. One of the diggers went for her with his spear just as the railway men opened fire from the machan and turned her, snapping, on her own wounds; a moment later, she lay stretched out dead in the dust of the laterite clay. In a trice the burrow was uncovered, and there they were, the spirits made flesh, huddled in a defensive posture with the two wolf cubs, snarling and panicked, scrabbling at the clay with their broken nails to dig themselves deeper. The tribesmen dropped their shovels and ran, panicked themselves, even as the Reverend Singh eased himself down into the hole and tried to separate child from wolf.

The larger of the children, her hair a feral cap that masked her features, came at him biting and scratching, and finally he had no recourse but to throw his net over the pullulating bodies and restrain each of the creatures separately in one of the long, winding *gelaps* the local tribesmen use for winter wear. On inspection, it was determined that the children were females, aged approximately three and six, of native stock, and apparently, judging from the dissimilarity of their features, unrelated. The she-wolf, it seemed, had abducted the children on separate occasions, perhaps even from separate locales, and over the course of some time. Was this the bereaved bitch that Chunarem had reported? the Reverend

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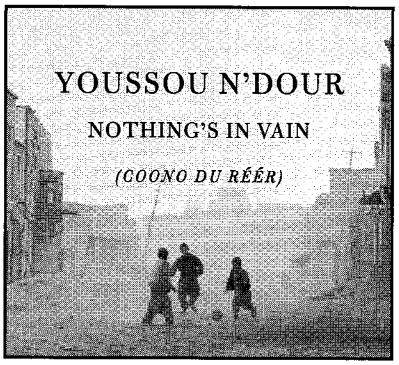

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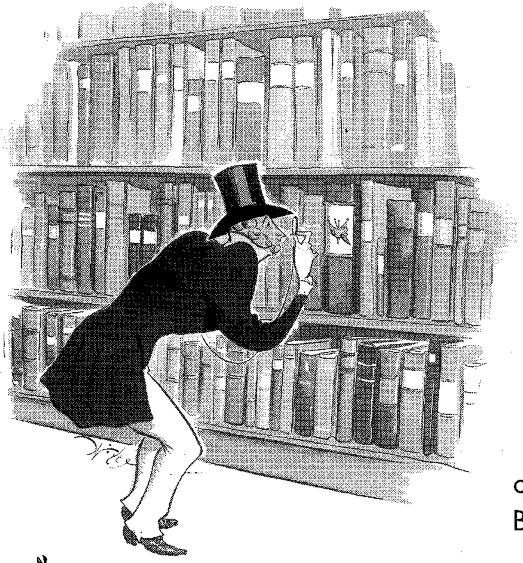

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wondered. Was she acting out of a desire for revenge? Or merely trying, in her own unknowable way, to replace what had been taken from her and ease the burden of her heart?

In any case, he had the children confined to a pen so that he could observe them, before caging them in the back of the bullock cart for the trip to Midnapore and the orphanage, where he planned to baptize and civilize them. He spent three full days studying them and taking notes. He saw that they persisted in going on all fours, as if they didn't know any other way, and that they fled from sunlight as if it were an instrument of torture. They thrust forward to lap water like the beasts of the forest and took nothing in their mouths but bits of twig and stone. At night they came to life and stalked the enclosure with shining eyes like the *bhuts* that half the villagers still believed them to be. They did not know any of the languages of the human species, but communicated with each other—and with their sibling wolves—in a series of grunts, snarls, and whimpers. When the moon rose, they sat on their haunches and howled.

It was Mrs. Singh who named them, some weeks later. They were pitiful, filthy, soiled with their own urine and excrement, undernourished, and undersized. They had to be caged to keep them from harming the other children, and Mrs. Singh, though it broke her heart to do it, ordered them put in restraints, so that the filth and the animal smell could be washed from them, even as their heads were shaved to defeat the ticks and fleas they'd inherited from the only mother they'd ever known. "They need delicate names," Mrs. Singh told her husband, "names to reflect the beauty and propriety they will grow into." She named the younger sister Amala, after a bright-yellow flower native to Bengal, and the elder Kamala, after the lotus that blossoms deep in the jungle pools.

RUNNING WITH THE PACK

The sun stroked her like a hand, penetrated and massaged the dark yellowing contusion that had sprouted on the left side of her rib cage. Her bones felt as if they were about to crack open and deliver their marrow and her heart was still pounding, but at least she was here, among the dogs, at rest. It was June, the season of pollen, the air supercharged with the scents of flowering, seeding, fruiting, and there were rabbits and squirrels everywhere. She lay prone at the lip of the den and watched the pups—long-muzzled like their mother and brindled Afghan peach and husky silver—as they worried a flap of skin and fur that Snout had peeled off the hot black glistening surface of the road and dropped at their feet. She was trying to focus on the dogs—on A1, curled up nose to tail in the trampled weed after regurgitating a mash of kibble for the pups, on Decidedly, his eyes half closed as currents of air brought him messages from afar, on Humper and Factitious—but she couldn't let go of the pain in her ribs and what that pain foreshadowed from the human side of things.

Don had kicked her. Don had climbed out of the car, crossed the field, and stood over her in his suède computer-engineer's ankle boots with the waffle bottoms and reinforced toes and lectured her while the dogs slunk low and rumbled deep in their throats. And, as his voice had grown louder, so, too, had the dogs' voices, until they were a chorus commenting on the ebb and flow of the action. When was she going to get her ass up out of the dirt and act like a normal human being? That was what he wanted to know. When was she going to cook a meal, run the vacuum, do the wash—his underwear, for Christ's sake? He was wearing dirty underwear, did she know that?

She had been lying stretched out flat on the mound, just as she was now. She glanced up at him as the dogs did, taking in a piece of him at a time, no direct stares, no challenges. "All I want," she said, over the chorus of growls and low, warning barks, "is to be left alone."

"Left alone?" His voice tightened in a little yelp. "Left alone? You need help, that's what you need. You need a shrink, you know that?"

She didn't reply. She let the pack speak for her. The rumble of their response, the flattened ears and stiffened tails, the sharp, savage gleam of their eyes should have been enough, but Don wasn't attuned. The sun seeped into her. A grasshopper she'd been idly watching

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as it bent a dandelion under its weight suddenly took flight, right past her face, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to snap at it and break it between her teeth.

Don let out some sort of exclamation—"My God, what are you doing? Get up out of that, get up out of that now!"—and it didn't help matters. The dogs closed in. They were fierce now, barking in savage recusancy, their emotions twisted in a single cord. But this was Don, she kept telling herself, Don from grad school, bright and buoyant Don, her mate, her husband, and what harm was there in that? He wanted her back home, back in the den, and that was his right. The only thing was, she wasn't going.

"This isn't research. This is bullshit. Look at you!"

"No," she said, giving him a lazy, sidelong look, though her heart was racing, "it's dog shit. It's on your shoes, Don. It's in your face. In your precious computer—"

That was when he'd kicked her. Twice, three times, maybe. Kicked her in the ribs as if he were driving a ball over an imaginary set of uprights in the distance, kicked and kicked again—before the dogs went for him. A1 came in first, tearing at a spot just above his right knee, and then Humper, the bulldog who, she now knew, belonged to the feathery old lady up the block, got hold of his pant leg while Barely went for the crotch. Don screamed and thrashed, all right—he was a big animal, two hundred and ten pounds, heavier by far than any of the dogs—and he threatened in his big animal voice and fought back with all the violence of his big animal limbs, but he backed off quickly enough, threatening still, as he made his way across the field and into the car. She heard the door slam, heard the motor scream, and then there was the last thing she heard: Snout barking at the wheels as they revolved and took Don down the street and out of her life.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

"You know he's locked her out, don't you?"

"Who?" Though he knew perfectly well.

"Don. I'm talking about Don and the dog lady?"

There was the table, made of walnut varnished a century before, the crystal vase full of flowers, the speckless china, the meat, the vegetables, the pasta. Softly, so softly he could barely hear it, there was Bach, too, piano pieces—partitas—and the smell of the fresh-cut flowers.

"Nobody knows where she's staying, unless it's out in the trash or the weeds or wherever. She's like a bag lady or something. Bea said Jerrilyn Hunter said she saw her going through the trash one morning. Do you hear me? Are you even listening?"

"I don't know. Yeah. Yeah, I am." He'd been reading lately. About dogs. Half a shelf of books from the library in their plastic covers—behavior, breeds, courting, mating, whelping. He excised a piece of steak and lifted it to his lips. "Did you hear the Leibowitzes' Afghan had puppies?"

"*Puppies*? What in God's name are you talking about?" Her face was like a burr under the waistband, an irritant, something that needed to be removed and crushed.

"Only the alpha couple gets to breed. You know that, right? And so that would be the husky and the Leibowitzes' Afghan, and I don't know who the husky belongs to—but they're cute, real cute."

"You haven't been—? Don't tell me. Julian, use your sense: she's out of her mind. You want to know what else Bea said?"

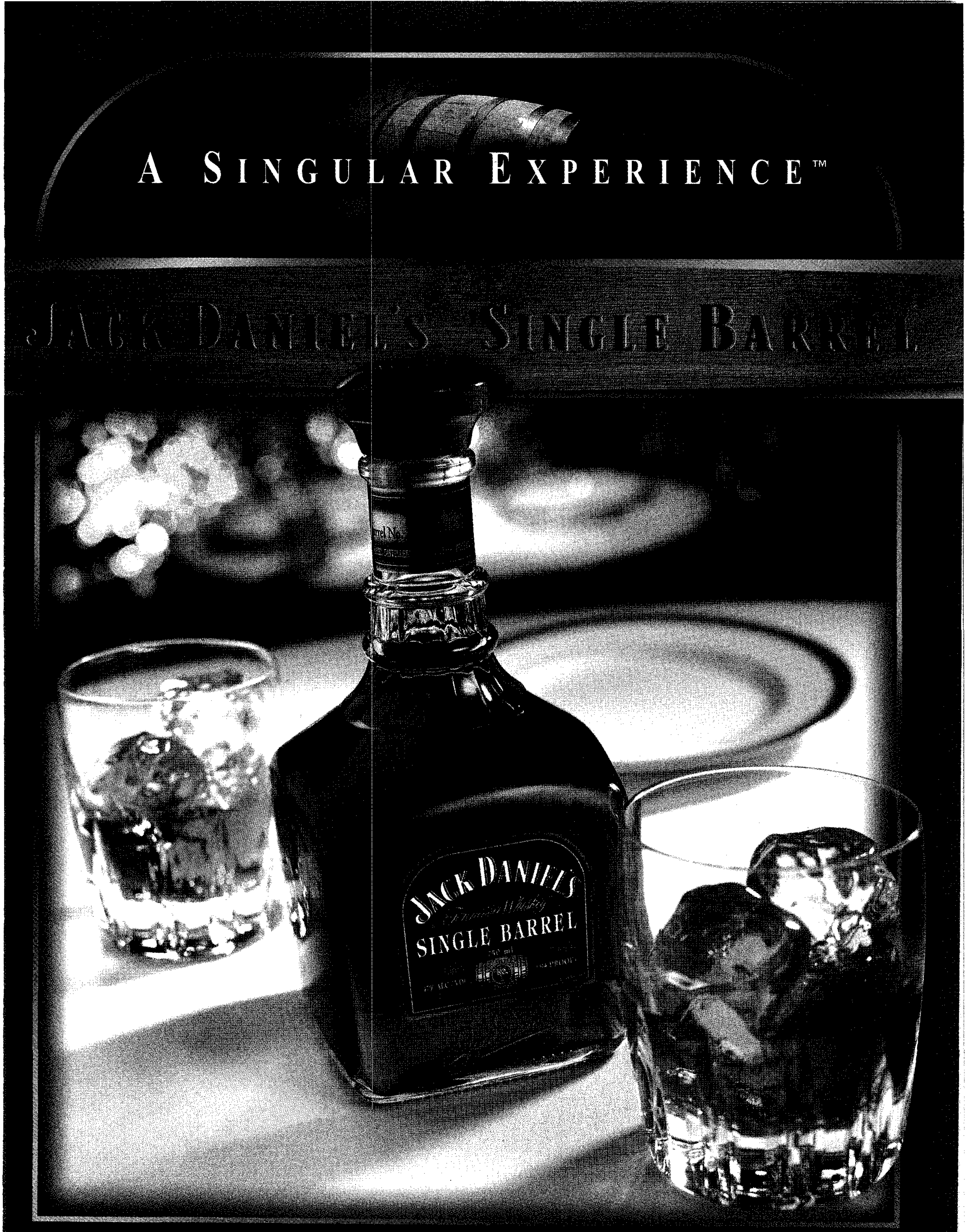
"The alpha bitch," he said, and he didn't know why he was telling her this, "she'll actually hunt down and kill the pups of any other female in the pack who might have got pregnant, a survival-of-the-fittest kind of thing—"

"She's crazy, bonkers, out of her *fucking* mind, Julian. They're going to have her committed, you know that? If this keeps up. And it will keep up, won't it, Julian? Won't it?"

THE COMMON ROOM AT MIDNAPORE

At first they would take nothing but raw milk. The wolf pups, from which they'd been separated for reasons both of sanitation and acculturation, eagerly fed on milk-and-rice pap in their kennel in one of the outbuildings, but neither of the girls would touch the pan-warmed milk or rice or the stewed vegetables that Mrs. Singh provided, even at night, when they were most active and their eyes spoke a language of desire all their own. Each morning and each evening before retiring, she would place a bowl on the floor in front of them, trying to tempt them with biscuits, confections, even a bit of boiled meat, though the Singhs were vegetarians themselves and repudiated the slaughter of animals for any purpose. The girls drew back into the recesses of the pen the Reverend had constructed in the orphanage's common room, showing their teeth. Days passed. They grew weaker. He tried to force-feed them balls of rice, but they scratched and tore at him with their nails and their teeth, setting up such a furious caterwauling of hisses, barks, and snarls as to give rise to rumors among the servants that he was torturing them. Finally, in resignation, and though it was a risk to the security of the entire orphanage, he left the door to the pen open in the hope that the girls, on seeing the other small children at play and at dinner, would soften.

In the meantime, though the girls grew increasingly lethargic—or perhaps because of this—the Reverend was able to make a close and telling examination of their physiology and habits. Their means of locomotion had transformed their bodies in a peculiar way. For one thing, they had developed thick pads of callus at their elbows and knees, and toes of abnormal strength and inflexibility—indeed, when their feet were placed flat on the ground, all five toes stood up at a sharp angle. Their waists were narrow and extraordinarily supple, like a dog's, and their necks dense with the muscle that had accrued there as a result of leading with their heads. And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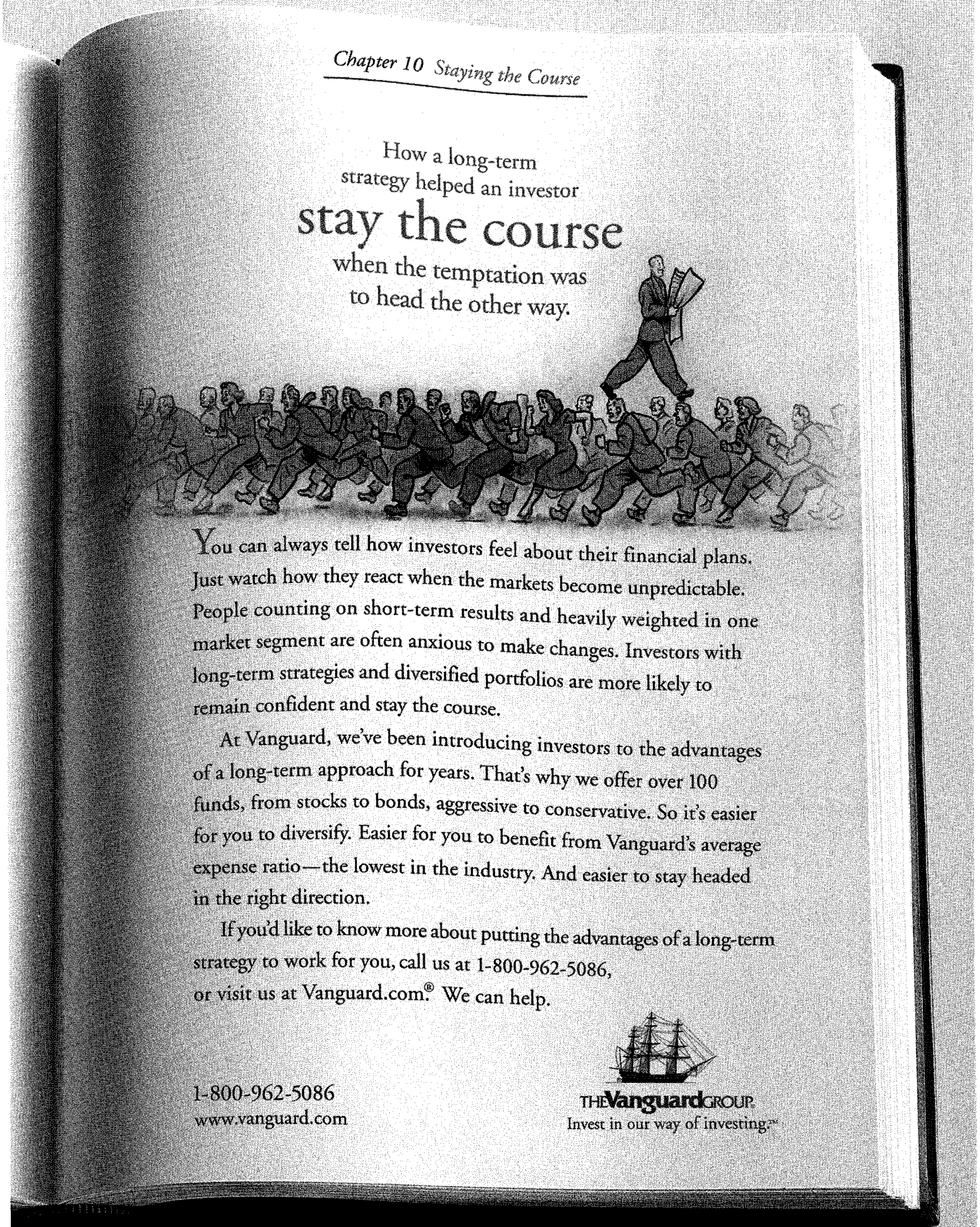

Chapter 10 Staying the Course

How a long-term
strategy helped an investor
stay the course
when the temptation was
to head the other way.

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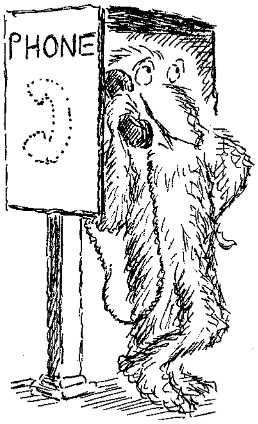
they were fast, preternaturally fast, and stronger by far than any other children of their respective ages that the Reverend and his wife had ever seen. In his diary, for the sake of posterity, the Reverend noted it all down.

Still, all the notes in the world wouldn't matter a whit if the wolf children didn't end their hunger strike, if that was what this was, and the Reverend and his wife had begun to lose hope for them, when the larger one—the one who would become known as Kamala—finally asserted herself. It was early in the evening, the day after the Reverend had ordered the door to the pen left open, and the children were eating their evening meal while Mrs. Singh and one of the servants looked on and the Reverend settled in with his pipe on the veranda. The weather was typical for Bengal in that season, the evening heavy and close, every living thing locked in the grip of the heat, and all the mission's doors and windows standing open to receive even the faintest breath of a breeze. Suddenly, without warning, Kamala bolted out of the pen, through the door, and across the courtyard to where the orphanage dogs were being fed scraps of uncooked meat, gristle, and bone left over from the preparation of the servants' meal, and before anyone could stop her she was down among them, slashing with her teeth, fighting off even the biggest and most aggressive of them until she'd bolted the red meat and carried off the long, hoofed shinbone of a gaur to gnaw in the farthest corner of her pen.

And so the Singhs, though it revolted them, fed the girls on raw meat until the crisis had passed, and then they gave them broth, which the girls lapped from their bowls, and finally meat that had been at least partially cooked. As for clothing—clothing for decency's sake—the girls rejected it as unnatural and confining, tearing any garment from their backs and limbs with their teeth, until Mrs. Singh hit on the idea of fashioning each of them a single tight-fitting strip of cloth they wore knotted round the waist and drawn up over their privates, a kind of diaper or loincloth they were forever soiling with their waste. It wasn't an ideal solution, but the Singhs were patient—the girls had suffered a kind of deprivation no other humans had ever suffered—and they understood that the ascent to civilization and light would be steep and long.



When Amala died, shortly after the wolf pups had succumbed to what the Reverend presumed was distemper communicated through the orphanage dogs, her sister wouldn't let anyone approach the body. Looking back on it, the Reverend would see this as Kamala's most human moment—she was grieving, grieving because she had a soul, because she'd been baptized before the Lord and was no wolfling or jungle *bhut* but a human child after all, and here was the proof of it. But poor Amala. Her, they hadn't been able to save. Both girls had been dosed with sulfur powder, which caused them to expel a knot of roundworms up to six inches in length and as thick as the Reverend's little finger, but the treatment was perhaps too harsh for the three-year-old, who was suffering from fever and dysentery at the same time. She'd seemed all right, feverish but calm, and Mrs. Singh had tended her through the afternoon and evening. But when the Reverend's wife came into the pen in the morning Kamala flew at her, raking her arms and legs and driving her back from the straw in which her sister's cold body lay stretched out like a figure carved of wood. They restrained the girl and removed the corpse. Then Mrs. Singh retired to bandage her wounds and the Reverend locked the door of the pen to prevent any further violence. All that day, Kamala lay immobile in the shadows at the back of the pen, wrapped in her own limbs. When night fell, she sat back on her haunches behind the rigid geometry of the bars and began to howl, softly at first, and then with increasing force and plangency until it was the very

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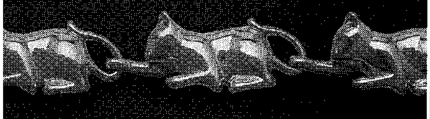

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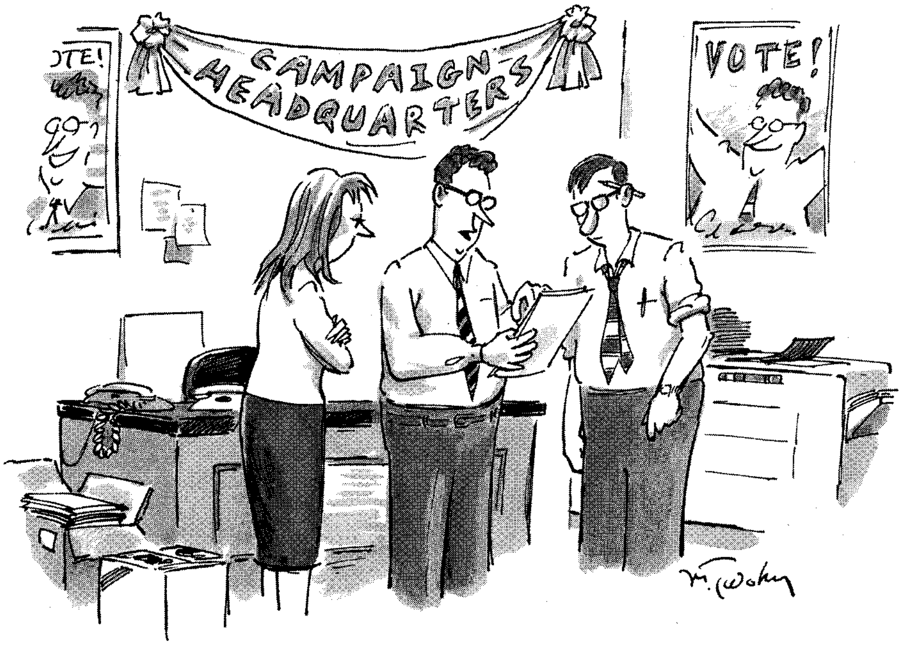
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"It's a good speech—just a couple of points that need obfuscation."

• •

sound of desolation itself, rising up out of the compound to chase through the streets of the village and into the jungle beyond.

GOING TO THE DOGS

The sky was clear all the way to the top of everything, the sun so thick in the trees that he thought it would catch there and congeal among the motionless leaves. He didn't know what prompted him to do it, exactly, but as he came across the field he balanced first on one leg and then the other, to remove his shoes and socks. The grass—the weeds, wildflowers, puffs of mushroom, clover, swaths of moss—felt clean and cool against the lazy progress of his bare feet. Things rose up to greet him, things and smells he'd forgotten all about, and he took his time among them, moving forward only to be distracted again and again. He found her, finally, in the tall nodding weeds that concealed the entrance of the den, playing with the puppies. He didn't say hello, didn't say anything—just settled in on the mound beside her and let the pups surge into his arms. The pack barely raised its collective head.

Her eyes came to him and went away again. She was smiling, a loose, private smile that curled the corners of her mouth and lifted up into the smooth soft terrain of the silken skin under her eyes. Her clothes barely covered her anymore, the turtleneck torn at the throat and sagging across one clavicle, the black jeans hacked off crudely—or maybe chewed off—at the peaks of her thighs. The sneakers were gone altogether, and he saw that the pale-yellow soles of her feet were hard with callus, and her hair—her hair was struck with sun and shining with the natural oil of her scalp.

He'd come with the vague idea—or, no, the very specific idea—of asking her for one of the pups, but now he didn't know if that would do, exactly. She would tell him that the pups weren't hers to give, that they belonged to the pack, and though each of the pack's members had a bed and a bowl of kibble awaiting it in one of the equitable houses of the alphabetical grid of the development springing up around them, they were free here, and the pups, at least, were slaves to no one. He felt the thrusting wet snouts of the creatures in his lap, the surge of their animacy, the softness of the stroked ears, and the prick of the milk teeth, and he smelled them, too, an authentic smell compounded of dirt, urine, saliva, and something else also: the unalloyed sweetness of life. After a while, he removed his shirt, and so what if the pups carried it off like a prize? The sun blessed him. He loosened his belt, gave himself some breathing room. He looked at her, stretched out beside him, at the lean, tanned, running length of her, and he heard himself say, finally, "Nice day, isn't it?"

"Don't talk," she said. "You'll spoil it."

"Right," he said. "Right. You're right."

And then she rolled over, bare flesh from the worried waistband of her cutoffs to the dimple of her breastbone and her breasts caught somewhere in between, under the yielding fabric. She was warm, warm as a fresh-drawn bath, the touch of her communicating everything to him, and the smell of her, too—he let his hand go up under the flap of material and roam over her breasts, and then he bent closer, sniffing.

Her eyes were fixed on his. She didn't say anything, but a low throaty rumble escaped her throat.

WAITING FOR THE RAINS

The Reverend Singh sat there on the veranda, waiting for the rains. He'd set his notebook aside, and now he leaned back in the wicker chair and pulled meditatively at his pipe. The children were at play in the courtyard, an array of flashing limbs and animated faces, attended by their high, bright catcalls and shouts. The heat had loosened its grip ever so perceptibly, and they were, all of them, better for it. Except Kamala. She was indifferent. The chill of winter, the damp of the rains, the full merciless sway of the sun—it was all the same to her. His eyes came to rest on her where she lay across the courtyard in a stripe of sunlight, curled in the dirt with her knees drawn up beneath her and her chin resting atop the cradle of her crossed wrists. He watched her for a long while as she lay motionless there, no more aware of what she was than a dog or an ass, and he felt defeated, defeated and depressed. But then one of the children called out in a voice fluid with joy, a moment of triumph in a game among them, and the Reverend couldn't help but shift his eyes and look. ♦

(Some details here are from Charles MacLean's "The Wolf Children: Fact or Fantasy?" and "Wolf-Children and Feral Man," by the Reverend J. A. L. Singh and Robert M. Zingg.)

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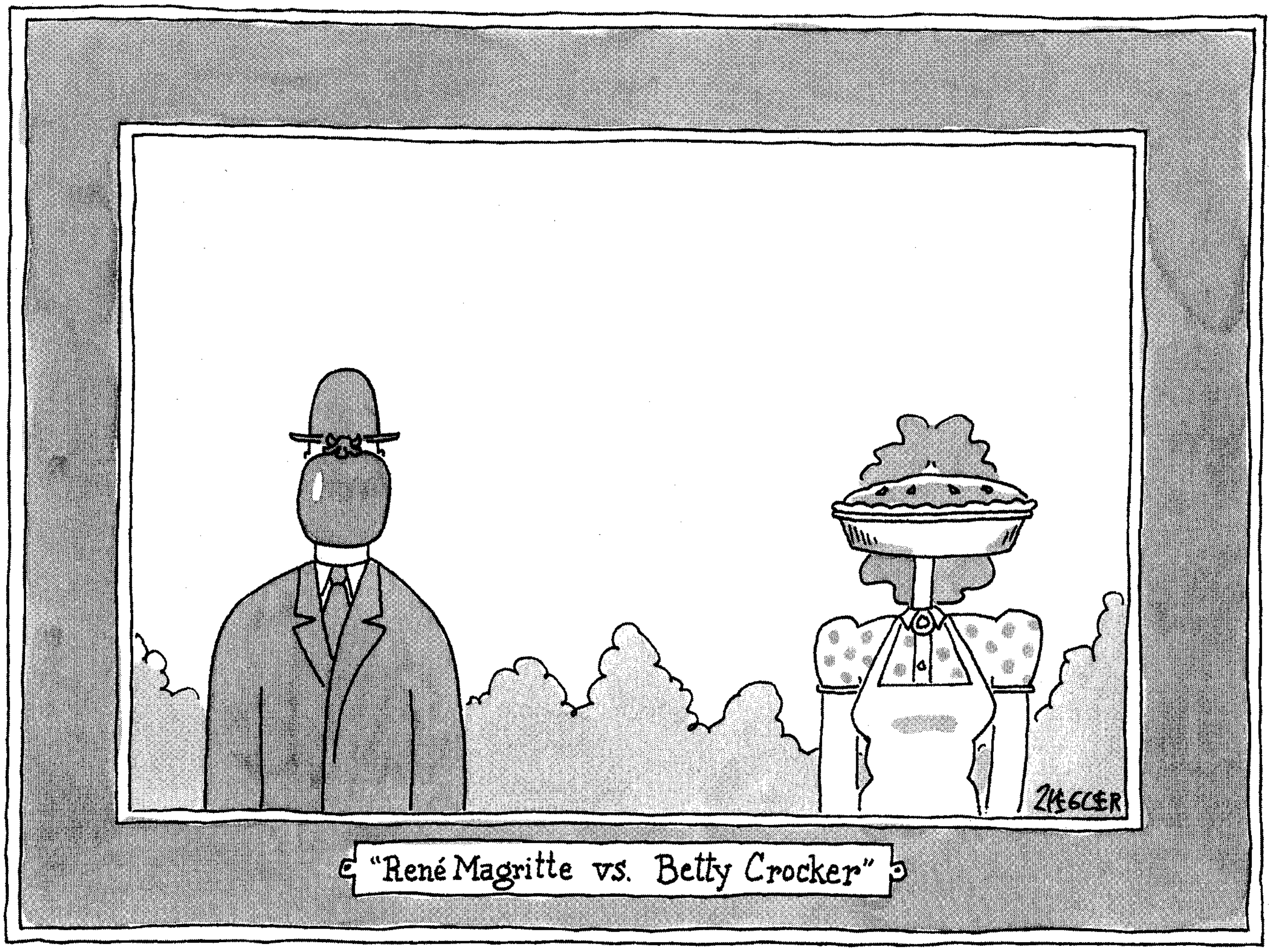
PORTFOLIO

DAYDREAMING ON PAPER

The cartoons of Jack Ziegler.

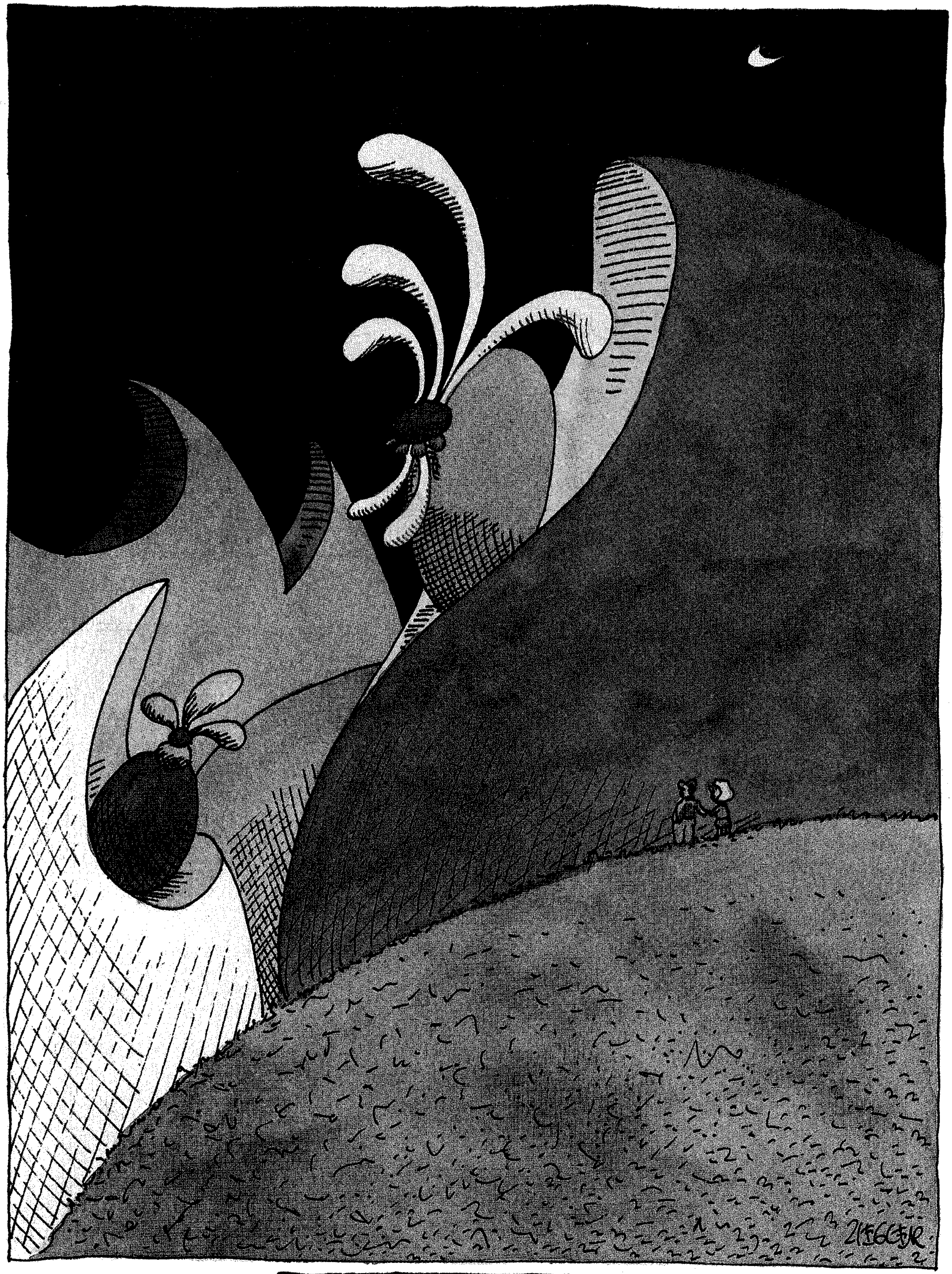

"René Magritte vs. Betty Crocker"
ZIEGLER

Many cartoonists are content to pursue traditional comedy by traditional means, to walk the well-trodden, carefully landscaped paths of classic setups and classic punch lines. In this context, Jack Ziegler is an off-road vehicle. He is, of course, a master of all the familiar genres, but he's even more at home in stranger precincts, where he leaves aside observations of human foibles and tries only to connect with the inner workings of his own imagination.

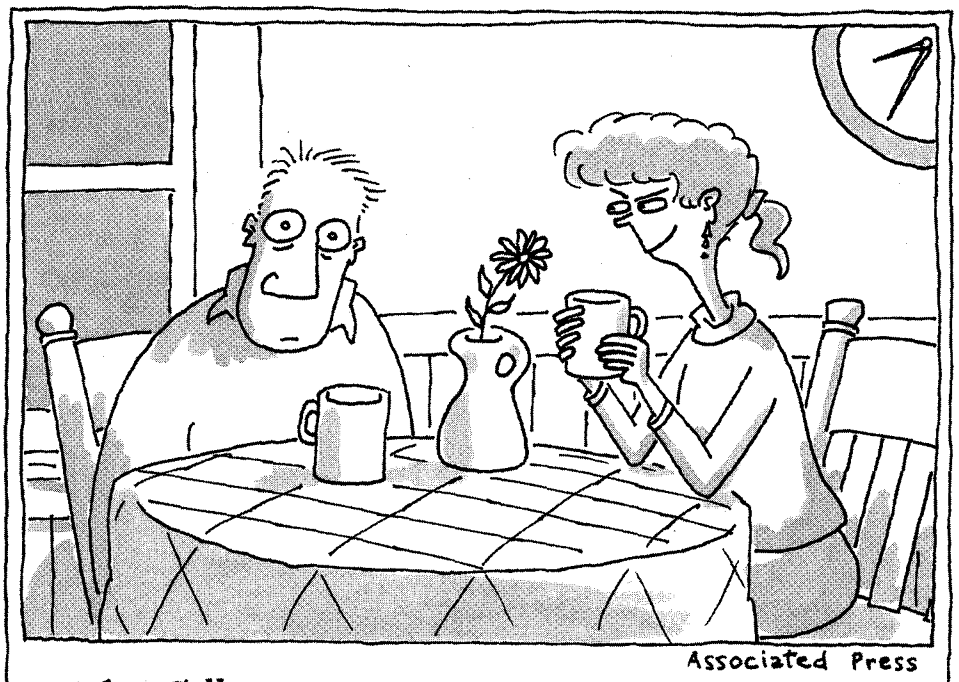
During three decades as a cartoonist—Ziegler has been drawing for *The New Yorker* regularly since the early seventies—he has published gag cartoons, current-events cartoons, and character-driven cartoons. But his most memorable cartoons are singular, synapse-tweaking works that draw equally on the subconscious and the mundane to produce a kind of pocket Surrealism. "Most of those evolve out of doodles," Ziegler says. "They don't come from a newspaper headline or from something I overheard. The writing doesn't come first. The picture comes first, and when it starts to look good to me I keep fiddling with it."

This process, which Ziegler calls "daydreaming on paper," has yielded such uncategorizable productions as "Empire State Building and a Side of Fries," "Ask Not for Whom the Refrigerator Hums—It Hums for Thee," and the plasticene fantasia of "Other People's Stuff."

Often cartoonists, like comedians, develop routines: they have stock companies of recognizable characters and comic strategies that are revisited and refined over time. Not Ziegler. He has an explanation for why he never repeats himself: "I find that when I'm doing my doodling I am most interested in what surprises me, and that's what I end up using." ♦

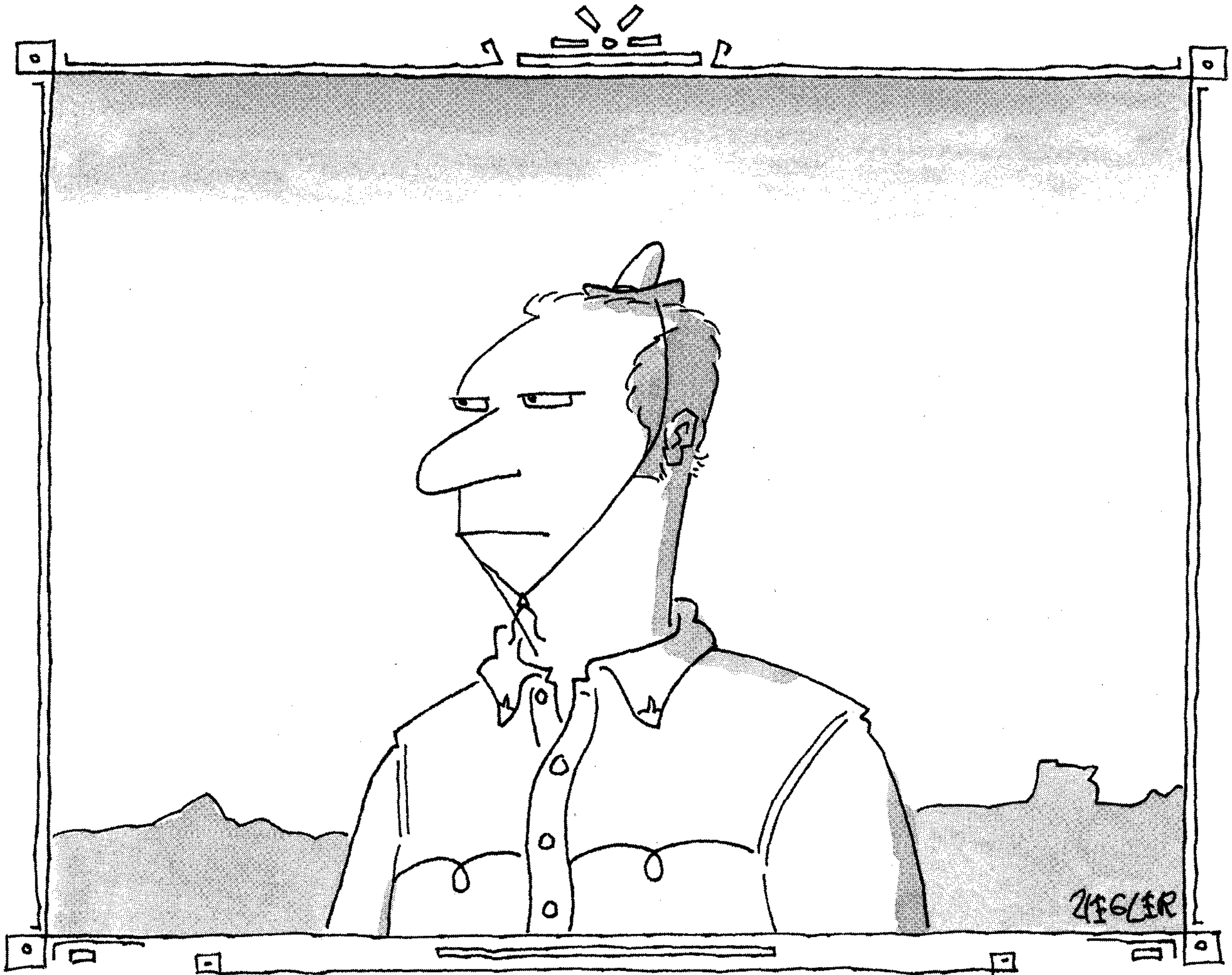


OTHER PEOPLE'S STUFF

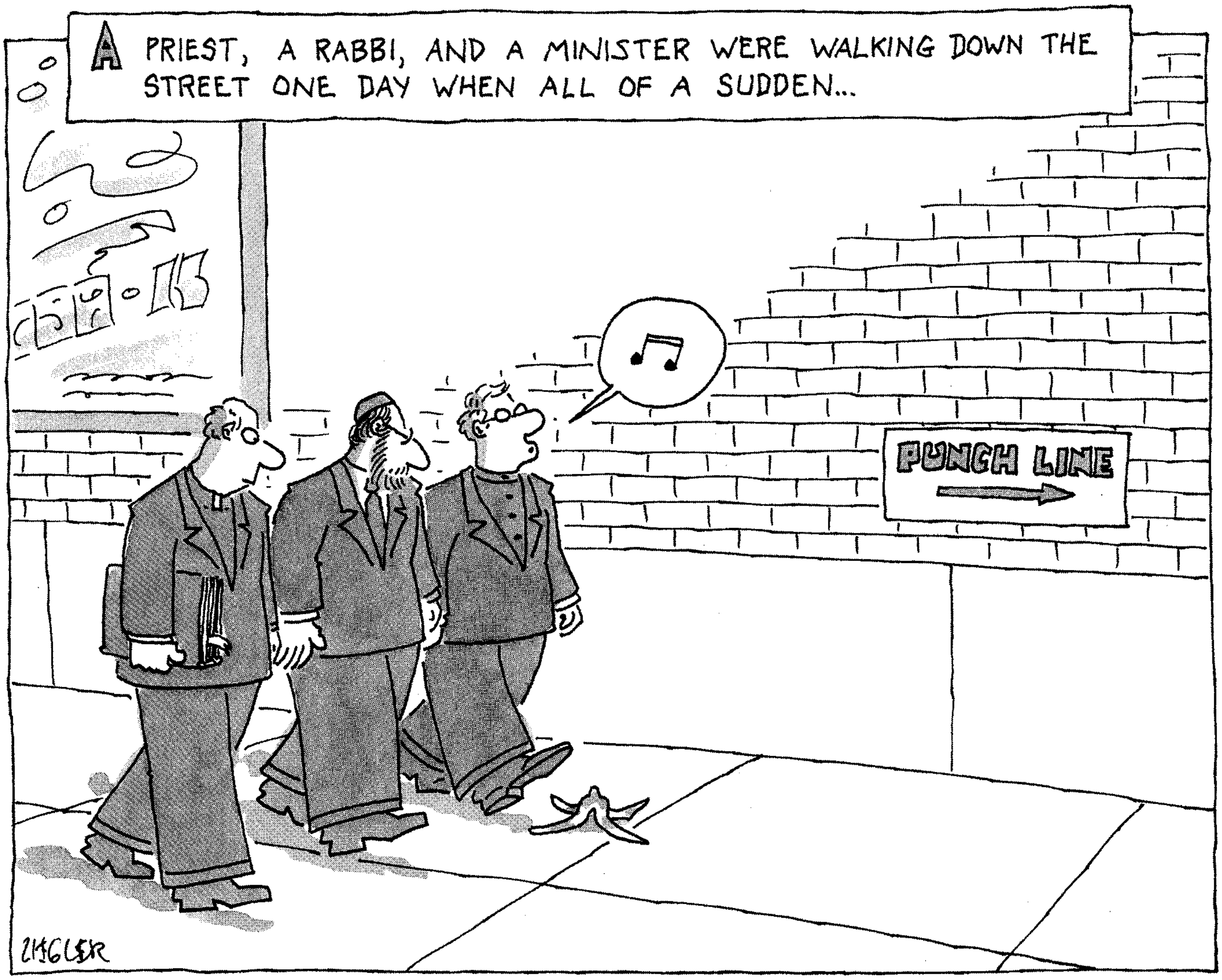


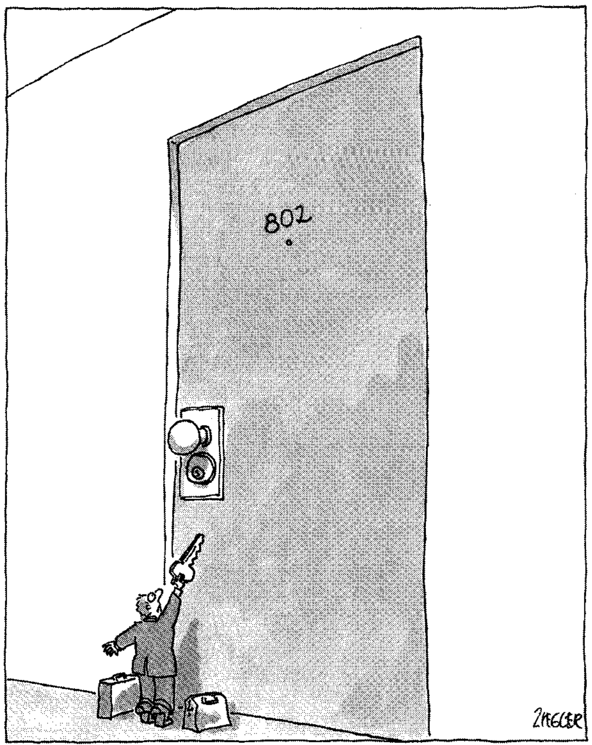
Associated Press

Natalie Collins, right, of Brookfield, Connecticut, is seen celebrating her victory over husband Ted after a quick game of "Disparate Memories."

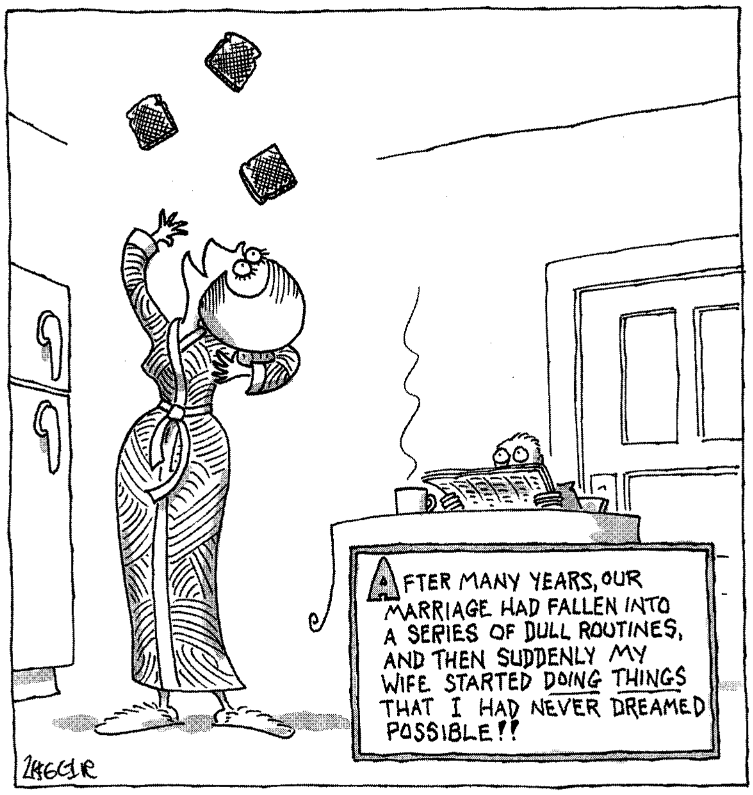


THE LAST OF THE ONE-GALLON HATS


A PRIEST, A RABBI, AND A MINISTER WERE WALKING DOWN THE STREET ONE DAY WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN...
♫
PUNCH LINE
ZIEGLER

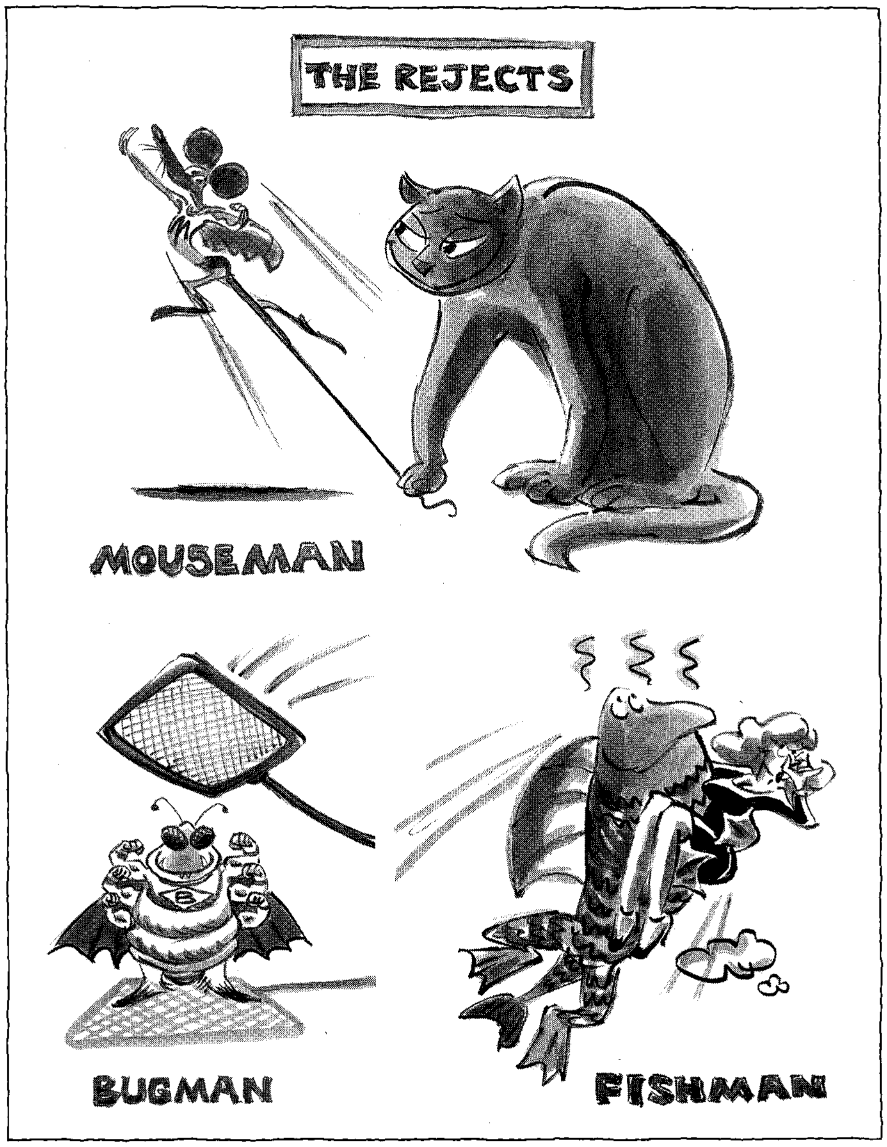

802
ZIEGLER

NEVER AGAIN WILL I RENT A ROOM AT THE BLUE WHALE MOTOR INN.


AFTER MANY YEARS, OUR MARRIAGE HAD FALLEN INTO A SERIES OF DULL ROUTINES, AND THEN SUDDENLY MY WIFE STARTED DOING THINGS THAT I HAD NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE!!
ZIEGLER

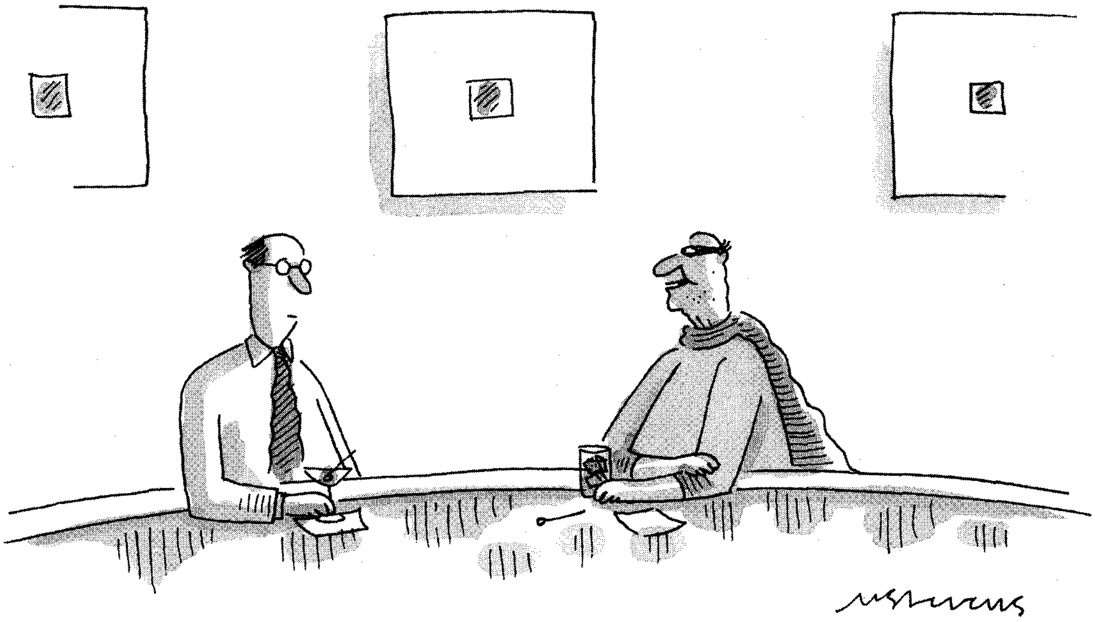
ALBUM

OUR HEROES

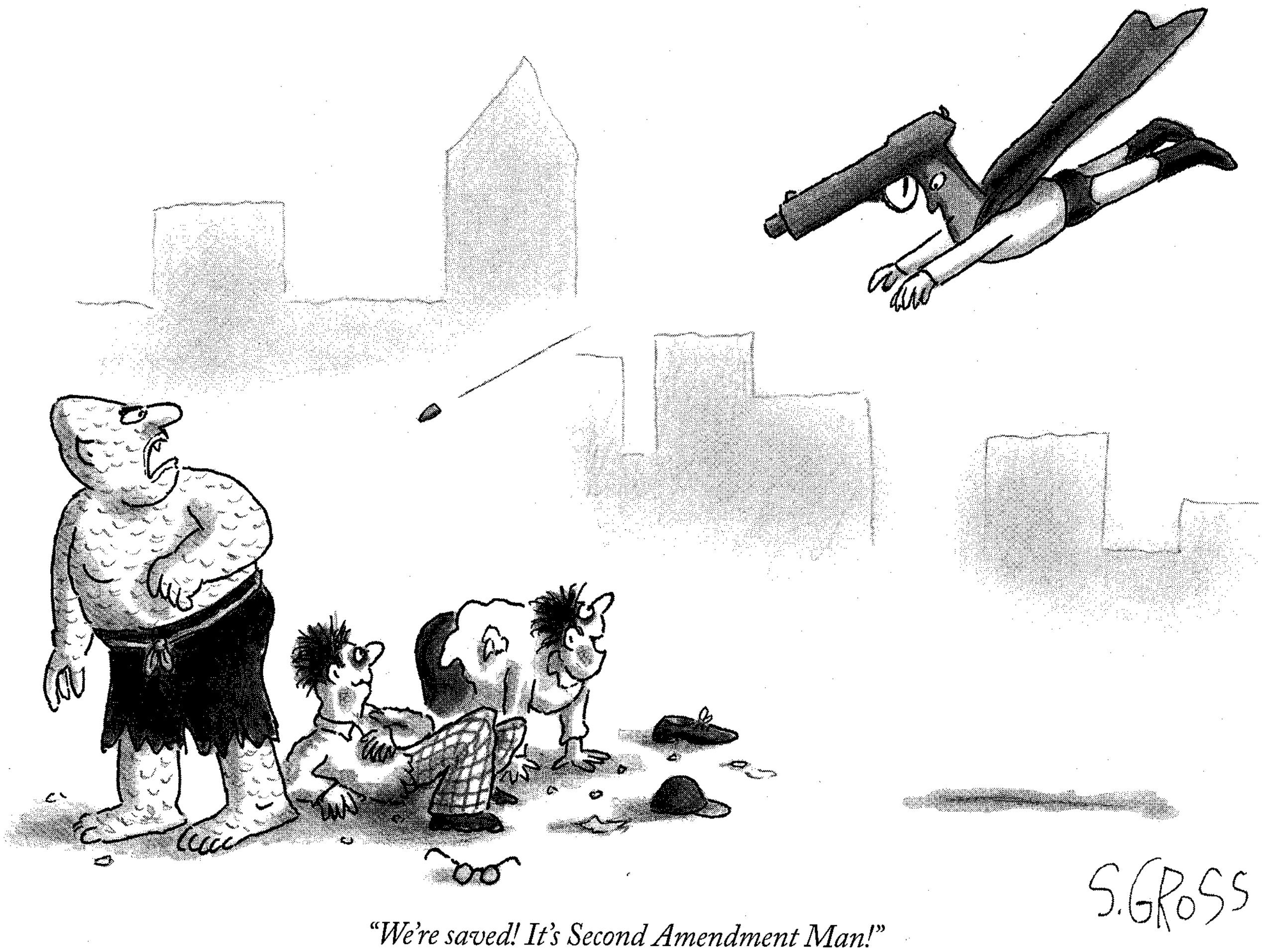


For graphic forms that are considered close relatives, the superhero comic and the panel cartoon couldn't be more different in their presentation of human (or animal) nature. The superhero comic views beings as super (or, in some cases, Superman), possessed of immense strength, intelligence, and moral authority. The panel cartoon has no interest in invincibility: characters worry about money, success, their expanding waistlines, or the way their parents treated them as children.

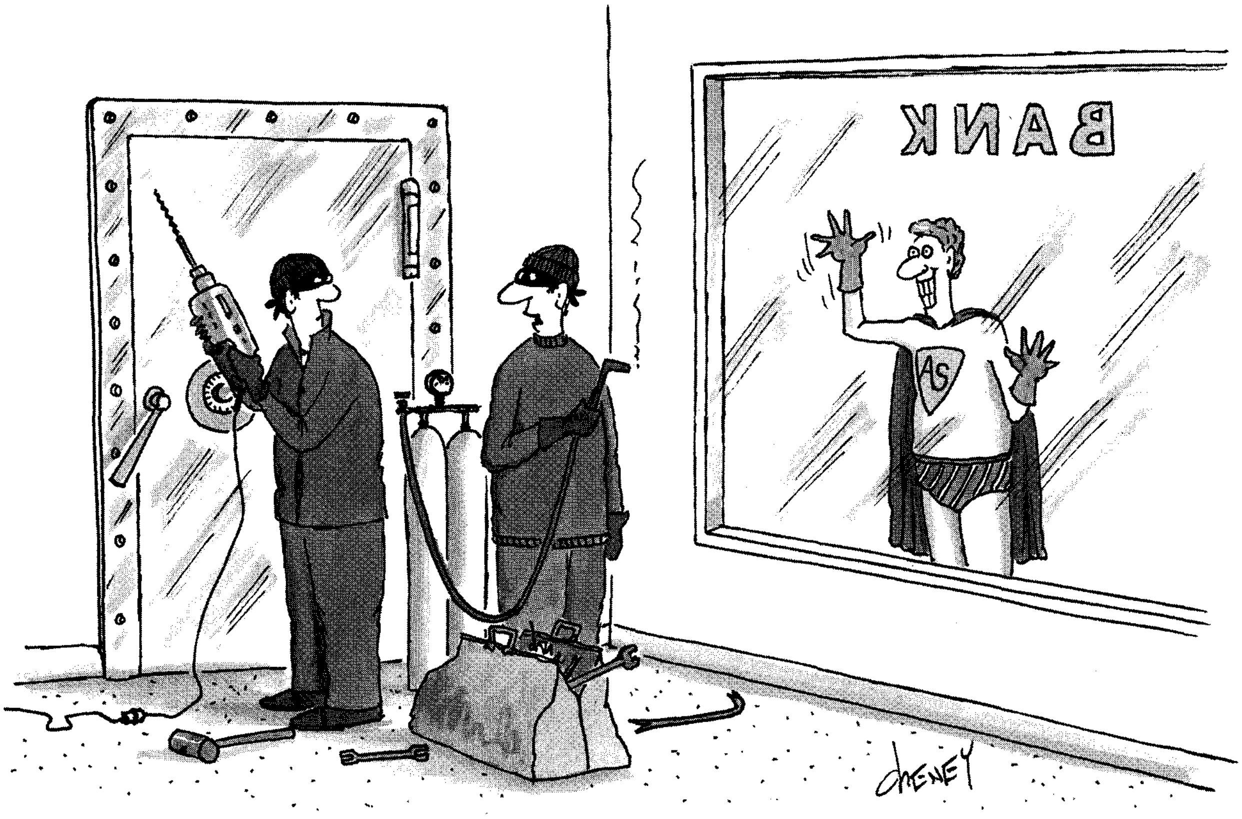
One way to illustrate the difference is to examine what happens when the two forms intersect. When a superhero is trapped within the four walls of a hand-drawn box, his legendary strength fails him. Even Superman, who never met a villain he couldn't vanquish, is brought to his knees—or a stool in a corner bar—by the comic demands of the panel cartoon, which require, after all, that he be as insecure and conflicted as the next man. The panel is the ultimate Kryptonite.



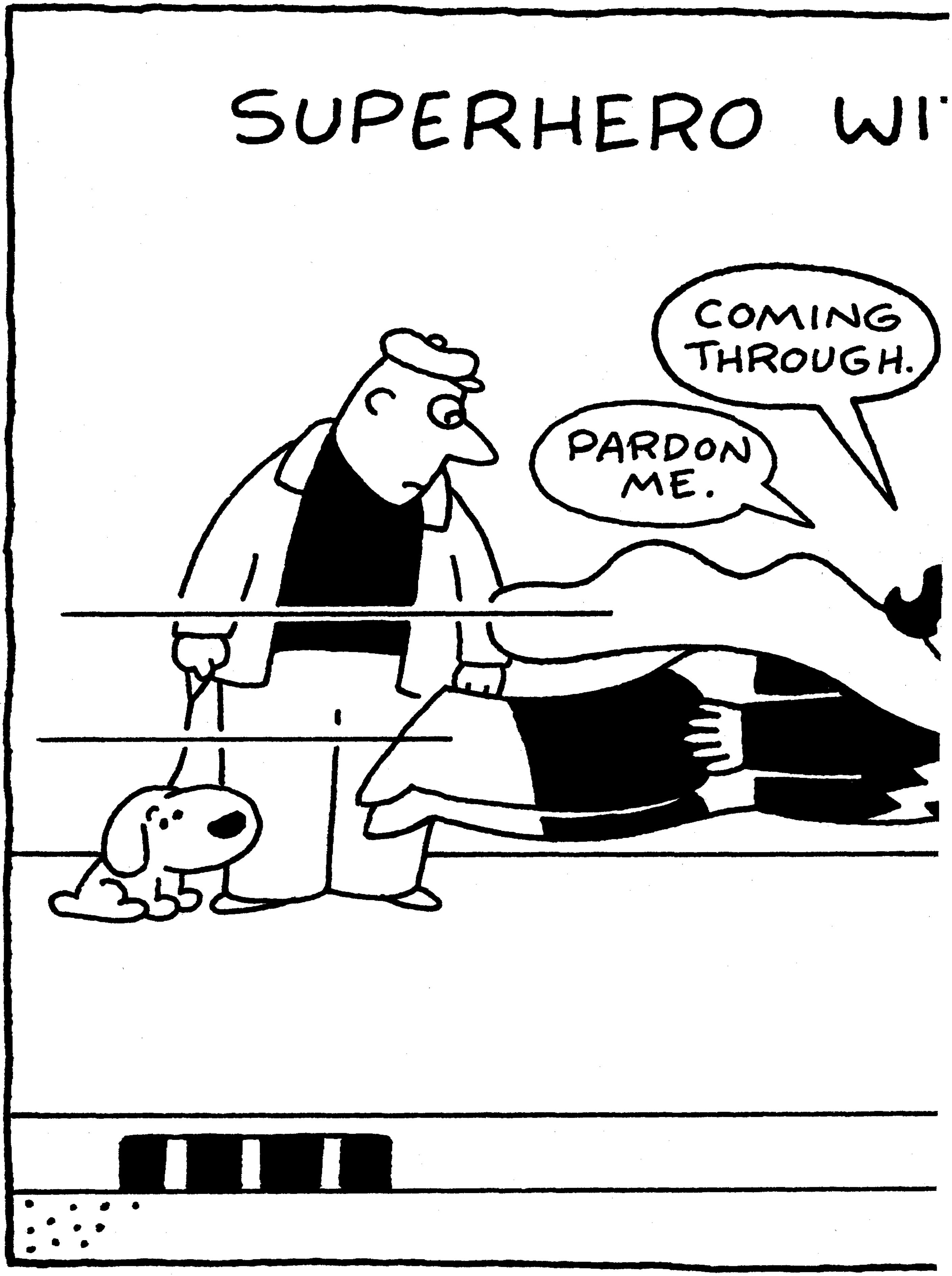
"Those days are over. I pretty much just sit around now and collect my royalties."

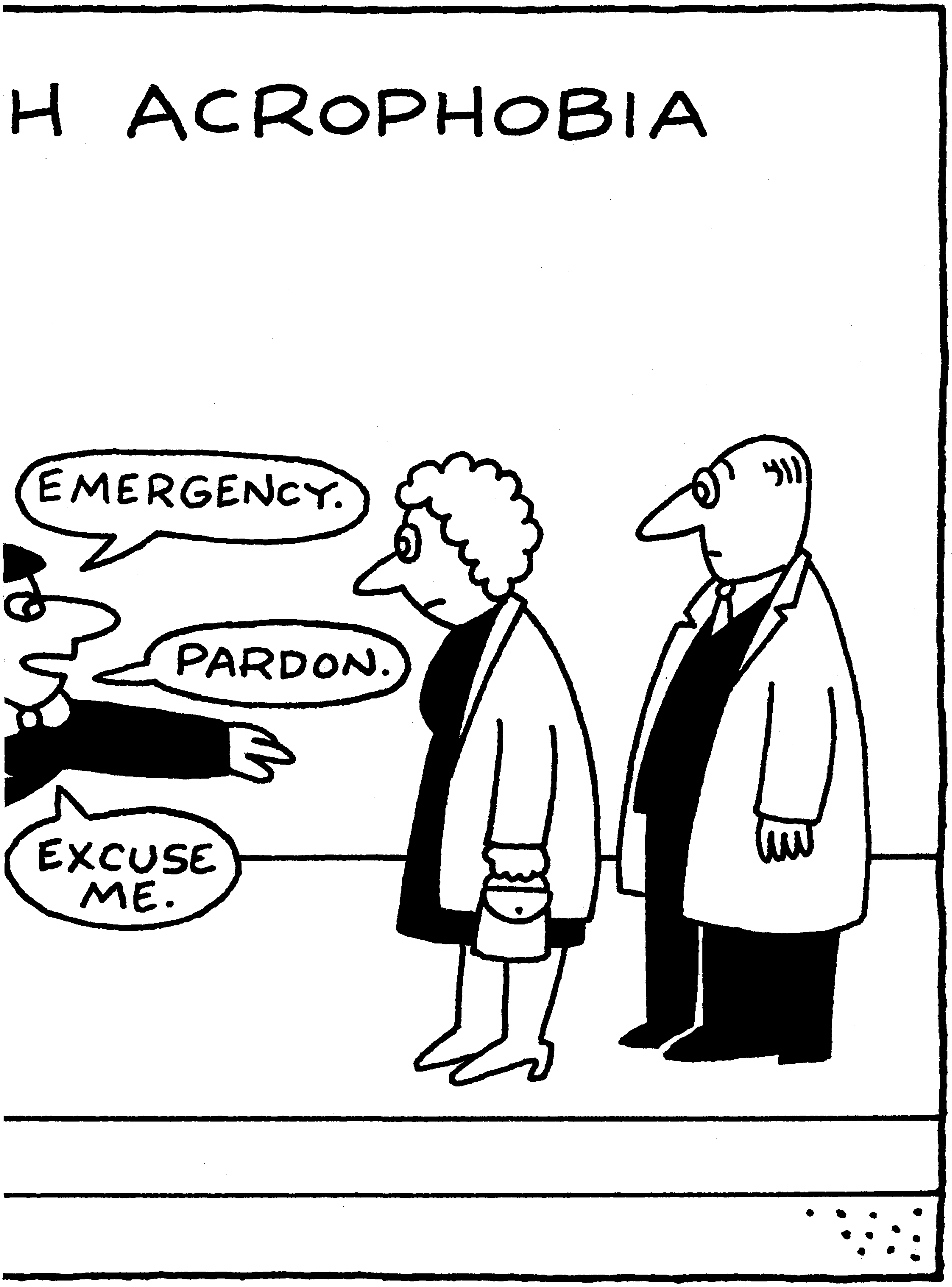


“We’re saved! It’s Second Amendment Man!”


BANK
AS
cheney

“Relax—it’s only the caped Approval Seeker.”

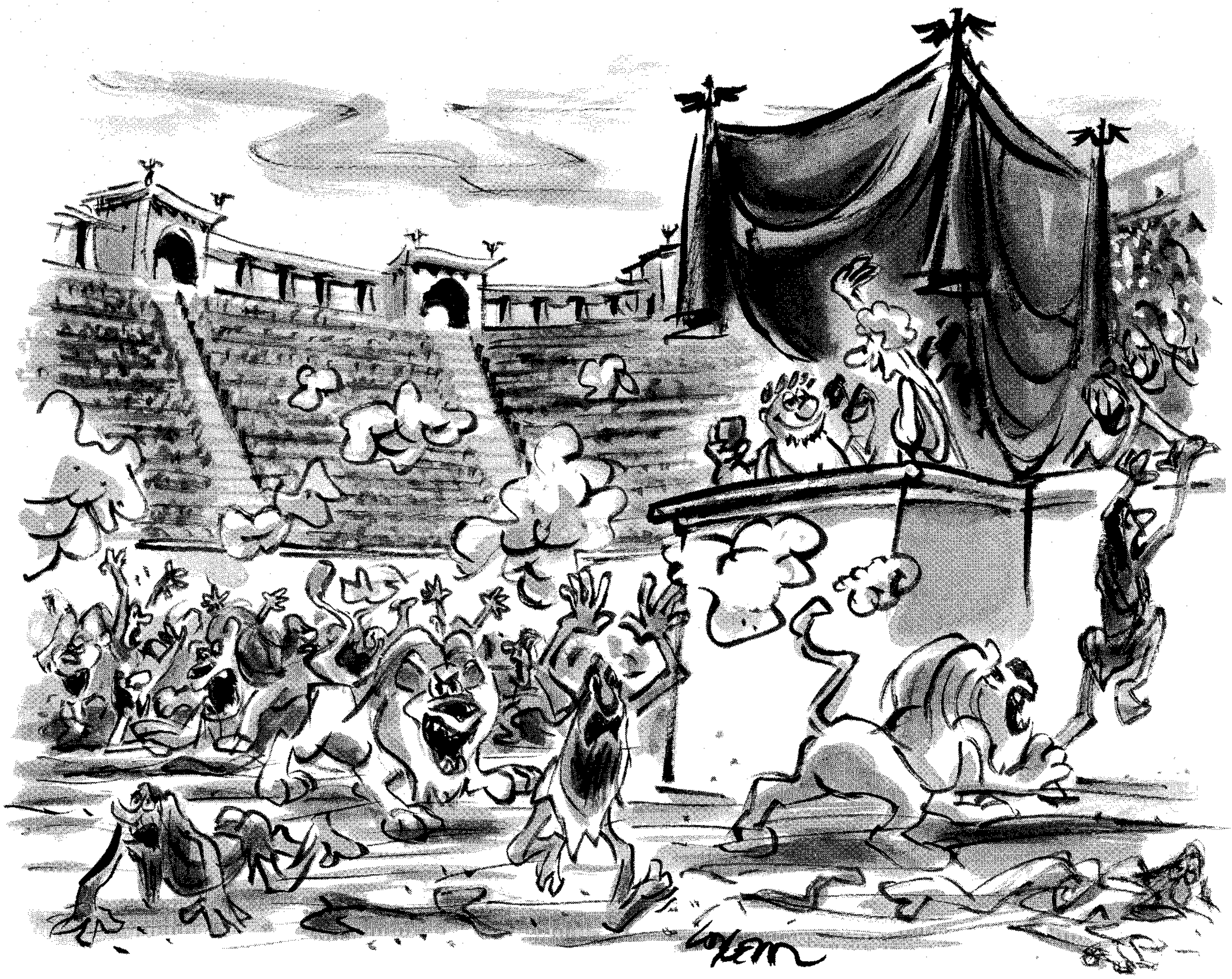

SUPERHERO WI
COMING THROUGH.
PARDON ME.



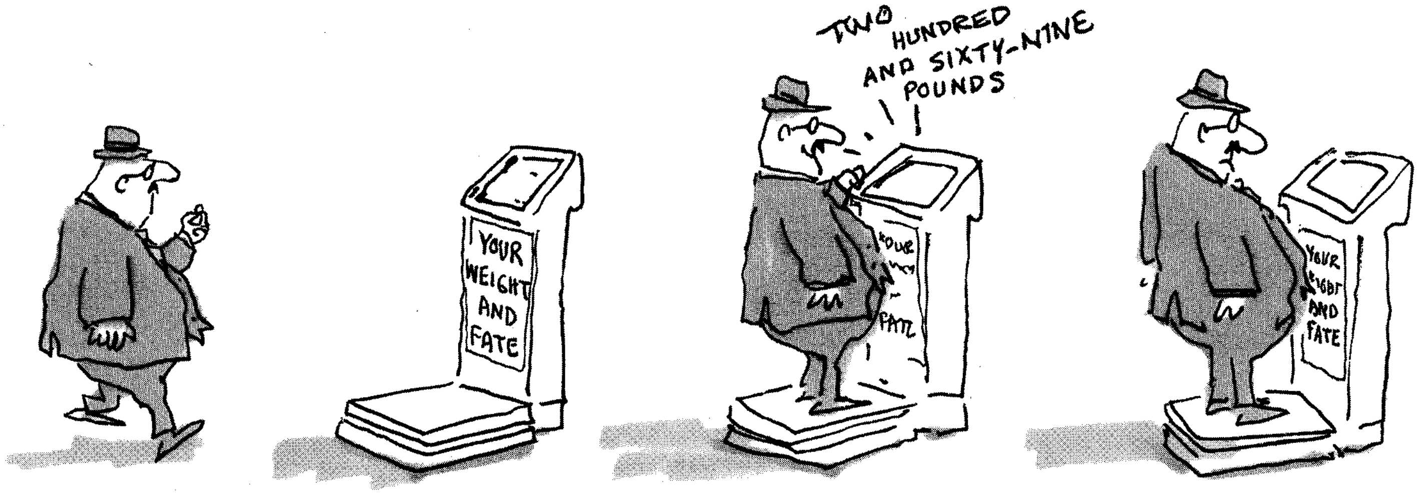
H ACROPHOBIA
EMERGENCY.
PARDON.
EXCUSE ME.

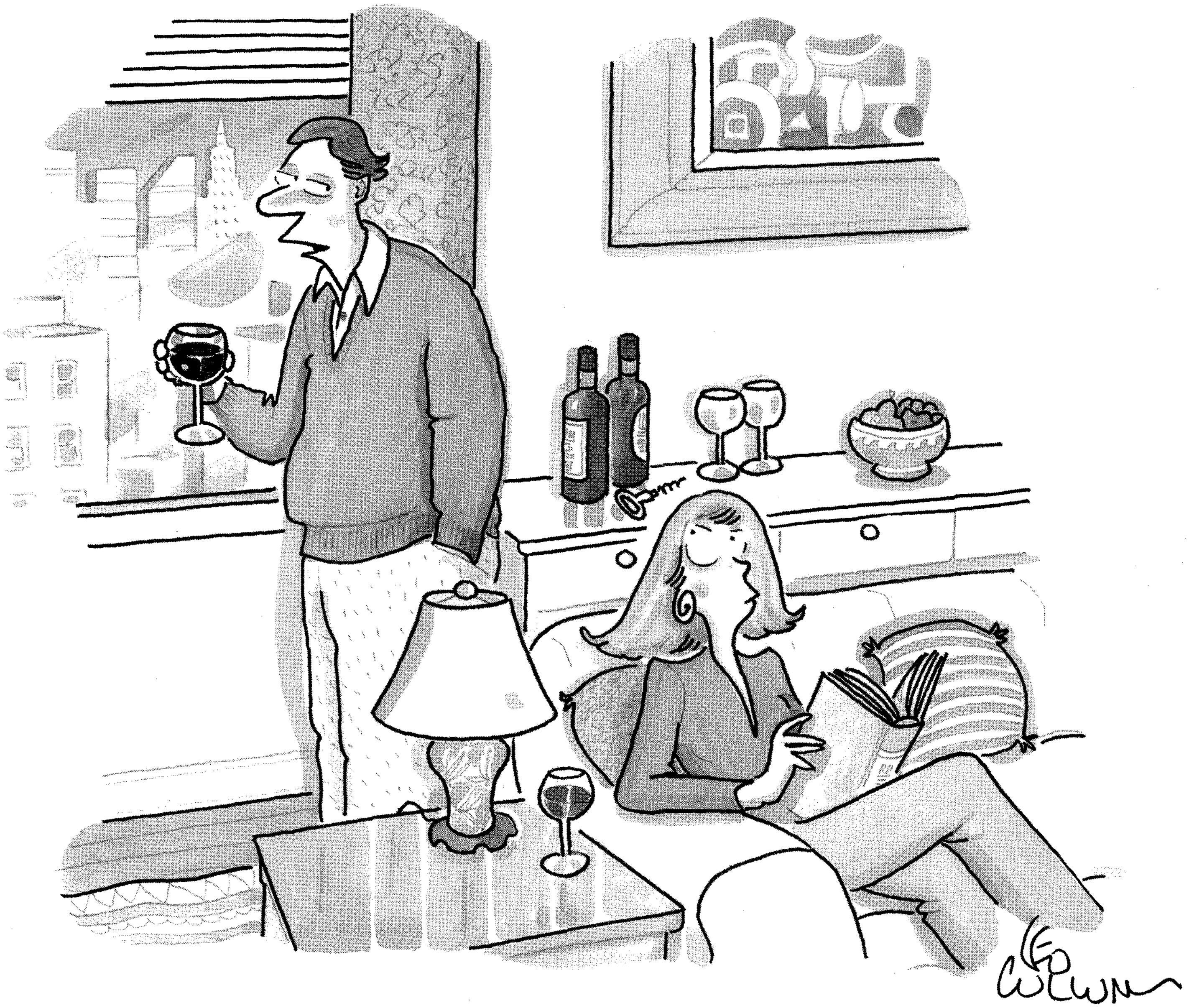
C Barsotti

THE FUNNIES

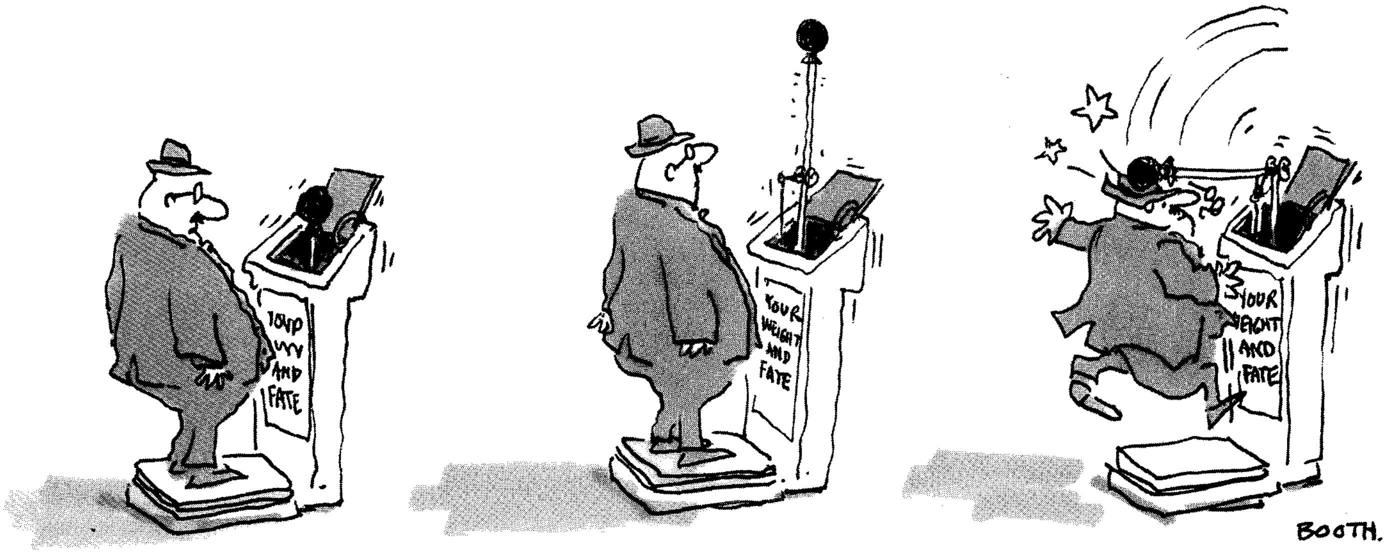


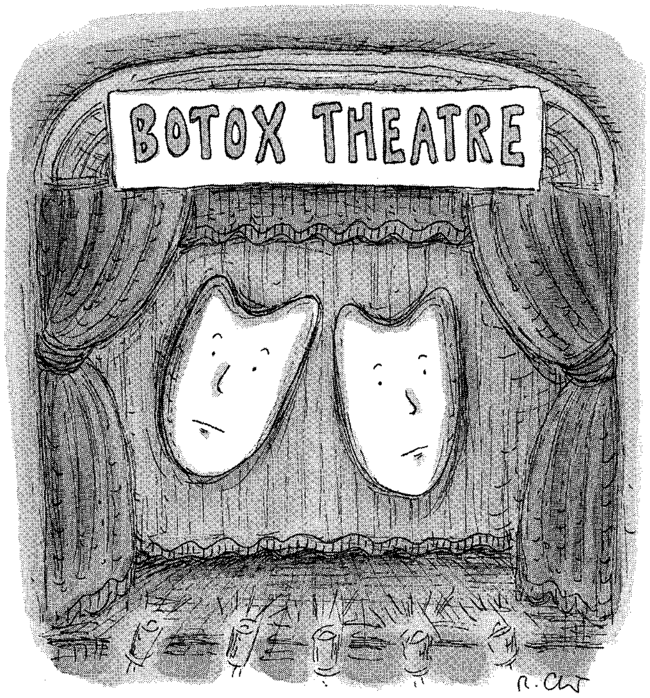
“Hail, Caesar! This weekend’s gross set a new record!”

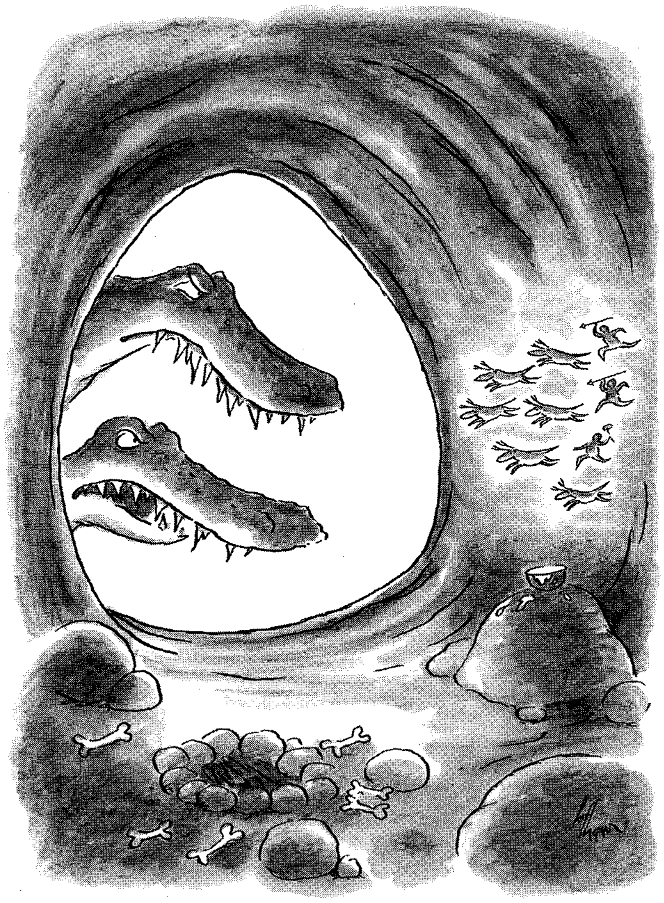

YOUR WEIGHT AND FATE
TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE POUNDS



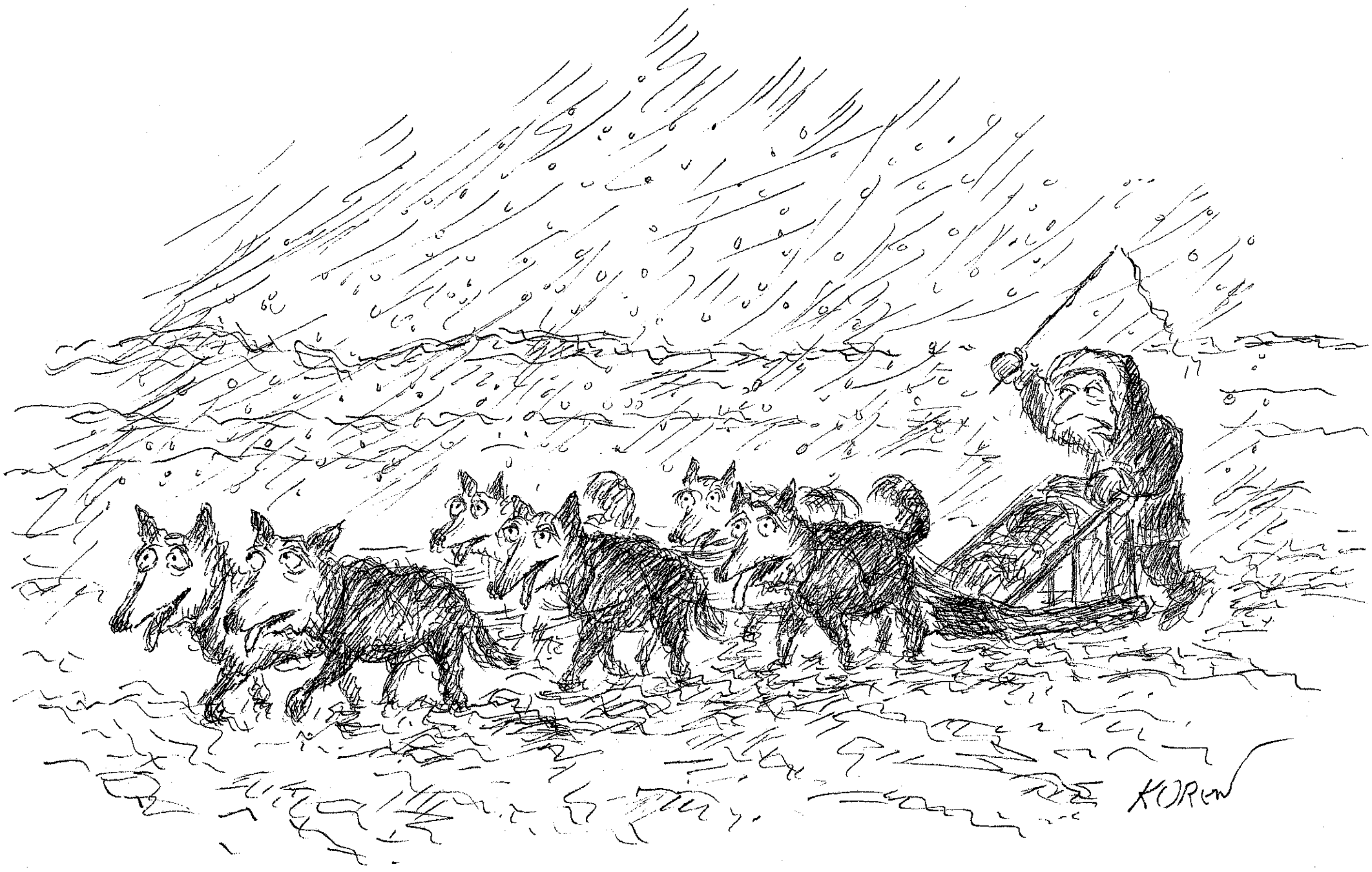
"Citizen of the world, wine connoisseur, husband. I may be spreading myself too thin."


YOUR WEIGHT AND FATE
YOUR WEIGHT AND FATE
YOUR WEIGHT AND FATE

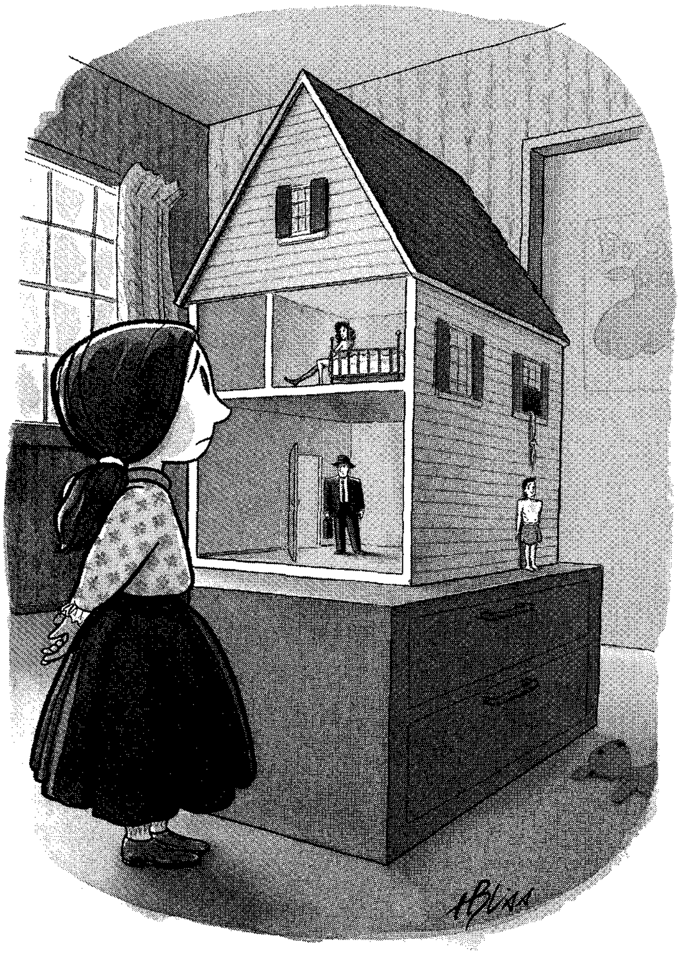

BOTOX THEATRE

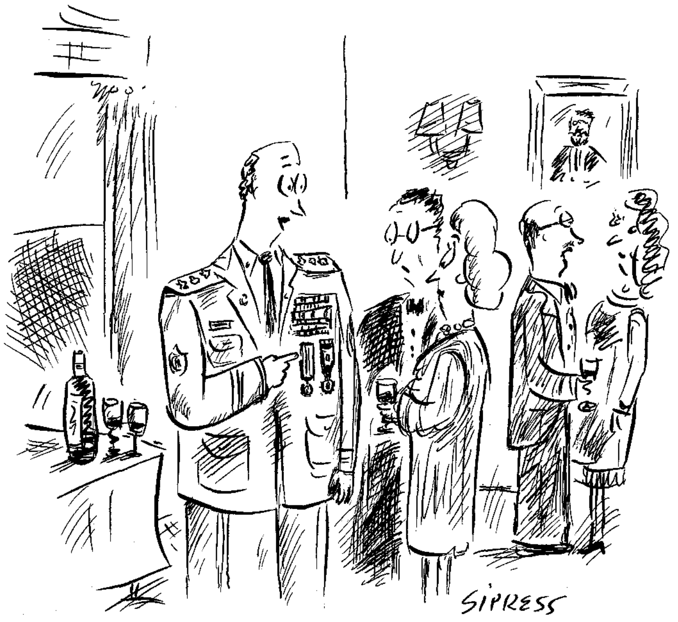


“They waste a lot of time on funny little pictures.”

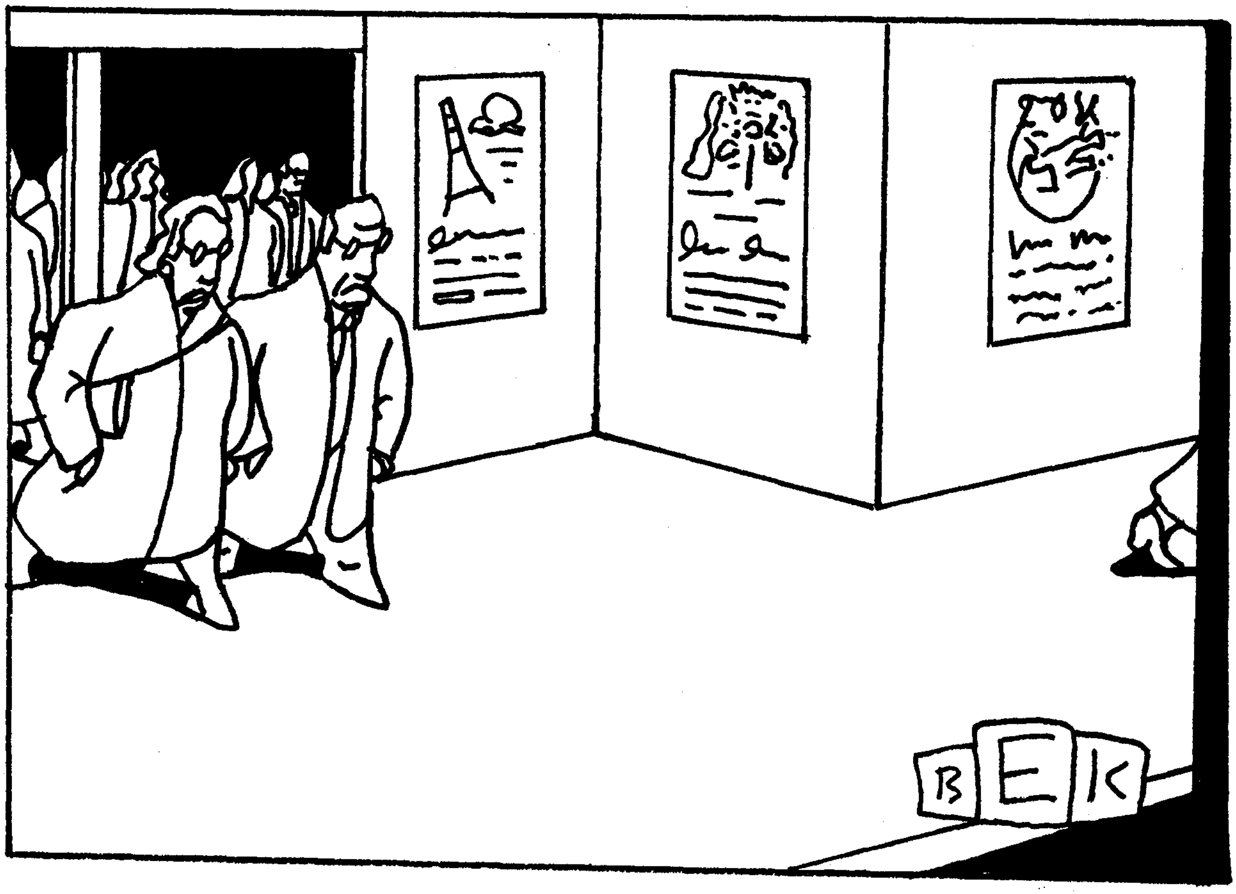


“On task! On task, you huskies!”

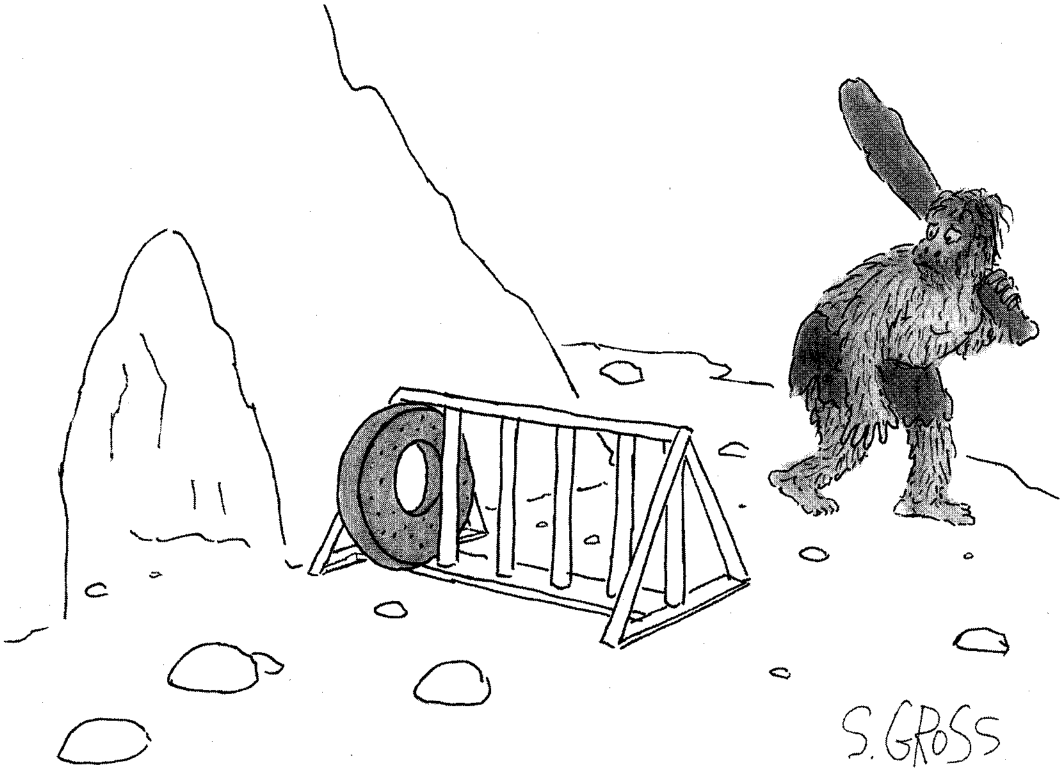


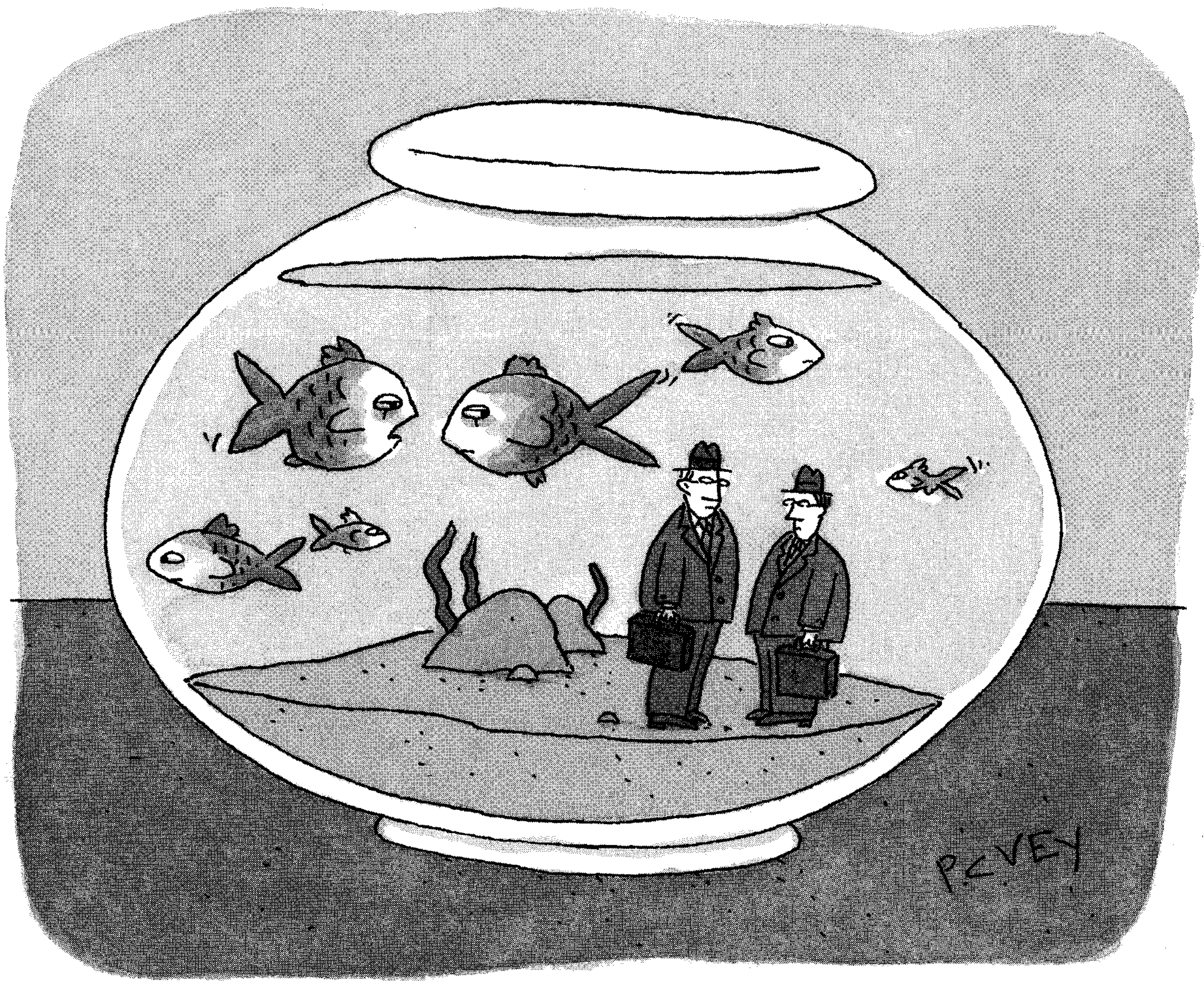


“This one’s for deterring. That one’s for preëmpting.”

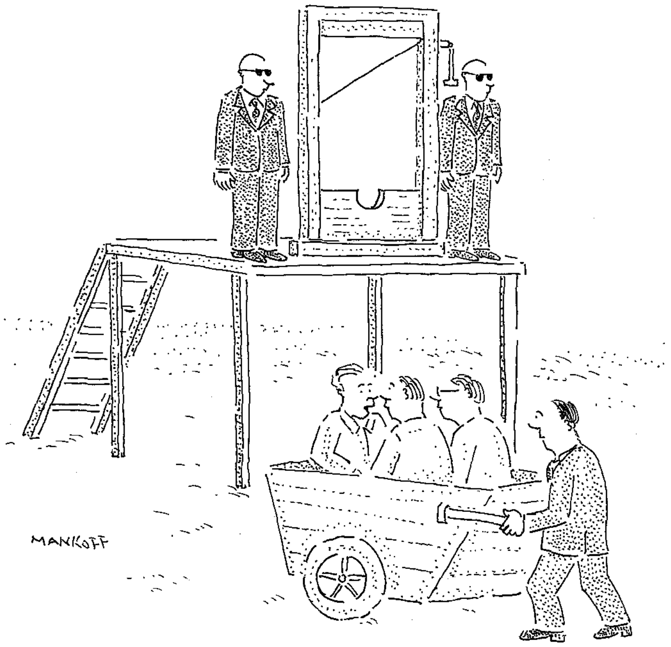


“I liked it, except for you.”

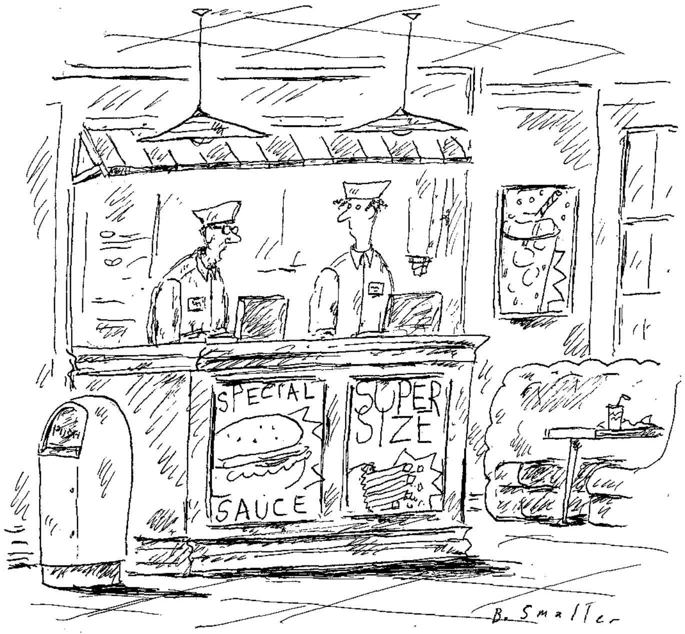




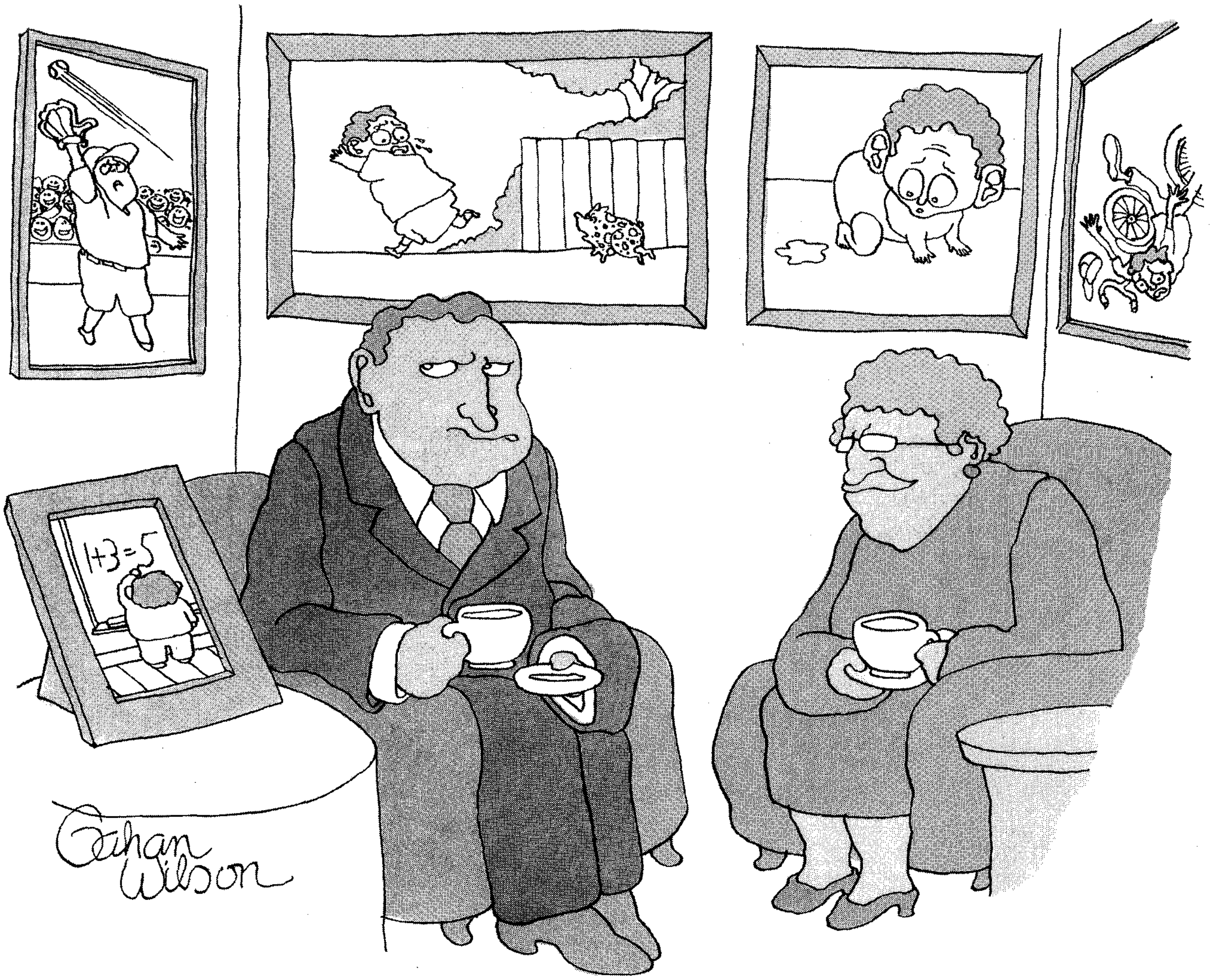
"Keep an eye on those two."



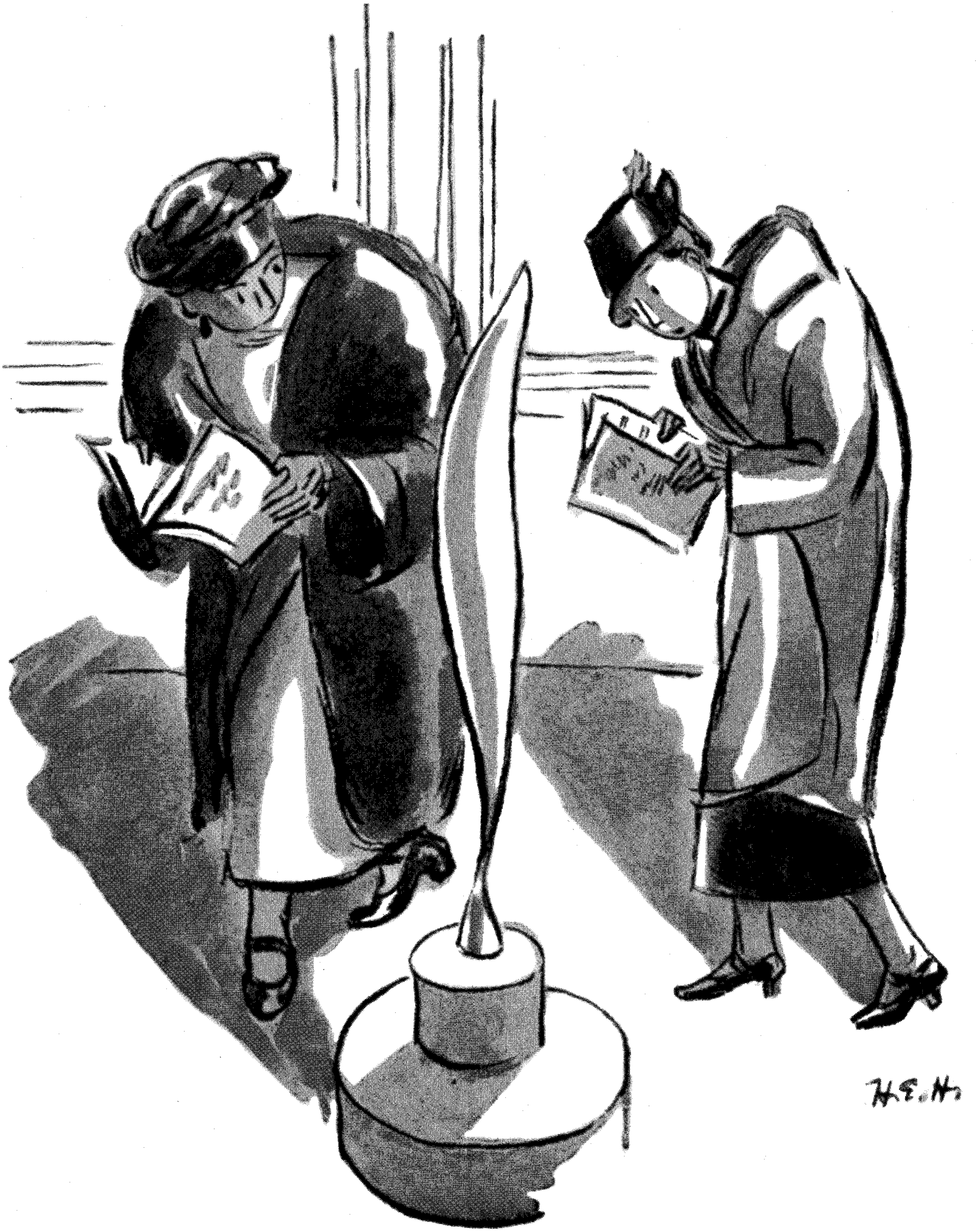
"I don't know about you guys, but I'm very disappointed in the severance package."


SPECIAL
SAUCE
SUPER SIZE
B. Smaller

"I was hoping by this age to have outlived my usefulness."


1+3=5
Gahan Wilson

"You still keep all the old pictures on display, don't you, Mama."


H.E.H.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

LEADING LADIES

Helen Elna Hokinson, born in rural Illinois in 1893, moved east to New York in 1920 to pursue a career as an illustrator. Five years later, she caught on at the brand-new *New Yorker*, which began sending her to illustrate cultural events: music recitals, dance classes, museum openings. From the first, Hokinson's perspective was gently satirical: in an early illustration, two elderly women regard a modernist sculpture (Brancusi's "Bird in Space") with apprehension. A few months after Hokinson joined the magazine, the editors began adding captions to her drawings, transforming them into cartoons.

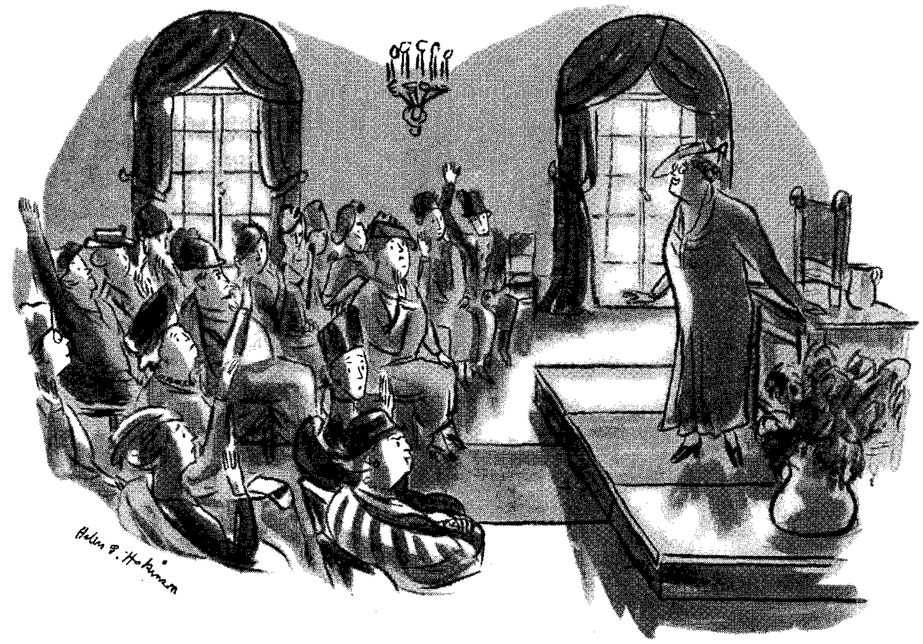
Hokinson is best known for her society ladies. Her talent—like that of many artists of her generation, including George Price and Peter Arno—was purely for the drawings themselves; the caption writing was left to others. Hokinson's collaborator was James Reid Parker; beginning in 1931, the two of them held weekly meetings to hash out ideas. If either was out of town, they continued the discussion via postcards.

Though Hokinson's ladies may strike the modern eye as shallow, in their time they were relatively complex. "I like my girls," she once said. "They don't say anything I don't say. To me they aren't superficial women seeking culture in an easy way. A stupid woman making a stupid remark isn't humorous, but an intelligent woman making a confused remark sometimes is."

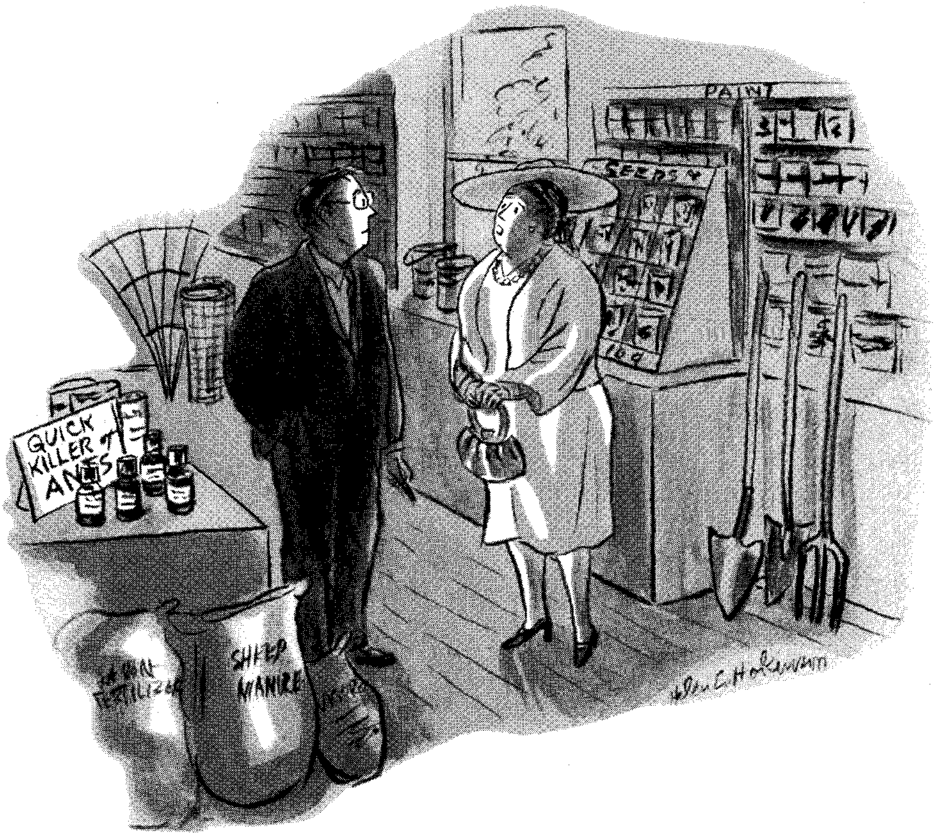
On November 1, 1949, Hokinson was on a flight to Washington, D.C., when the plane crashed, killing all passengers. She was working right up until the end: at LaGuardia Airport that morning, she had sketched a man and woman arguing and mailed it to Parker, along with a note saying, "Can't we do something with these people?"

—*Liza Donnelly*

OPPOSITE: 2/6/26; TOP: 9/28/35; BOTTOM: 8/2/41



"The vote is now fifteen to one that we deplore Mussolini's attitude. I think it would be nice if we could go on record unanimously deploring Mussolini's attitude."

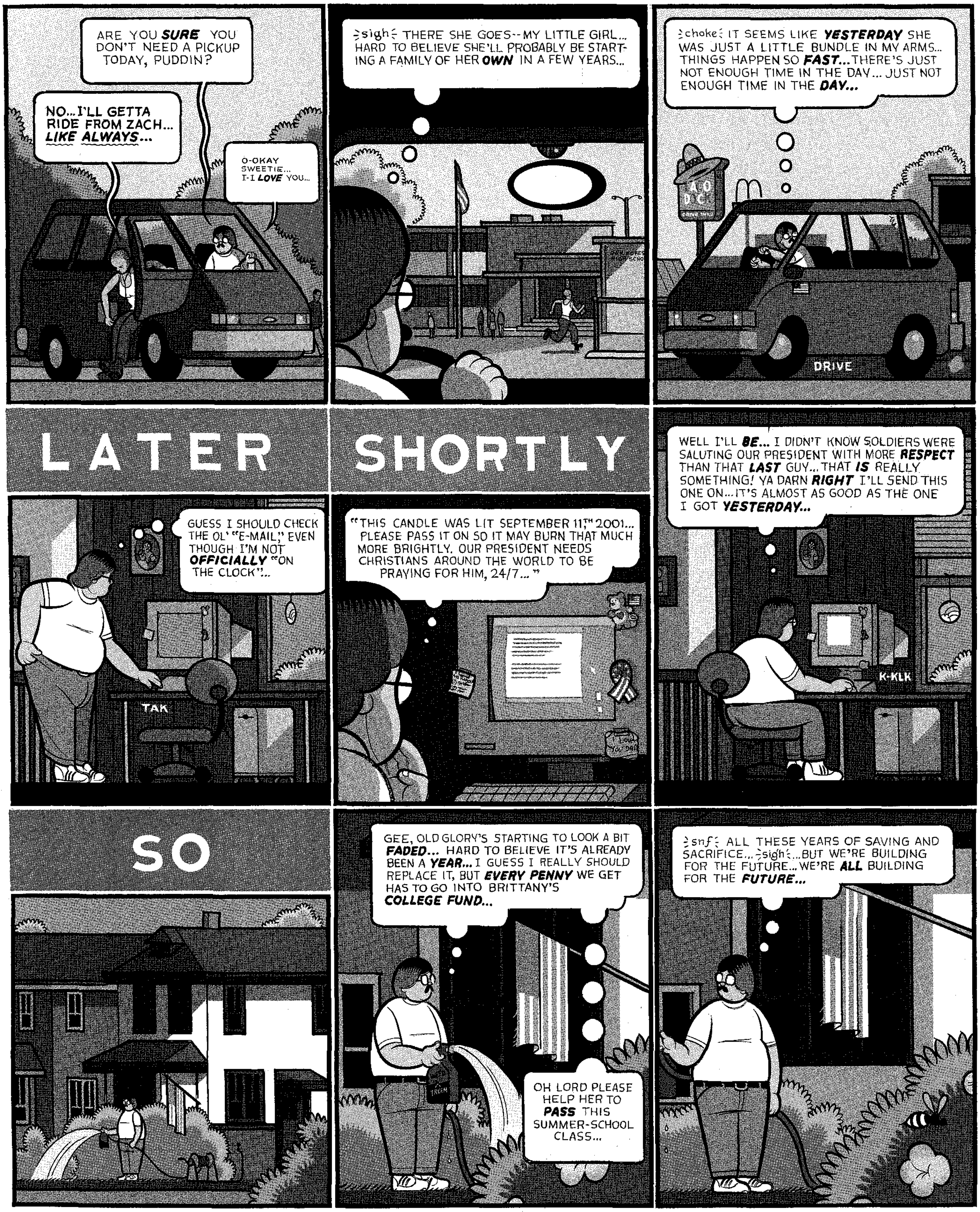


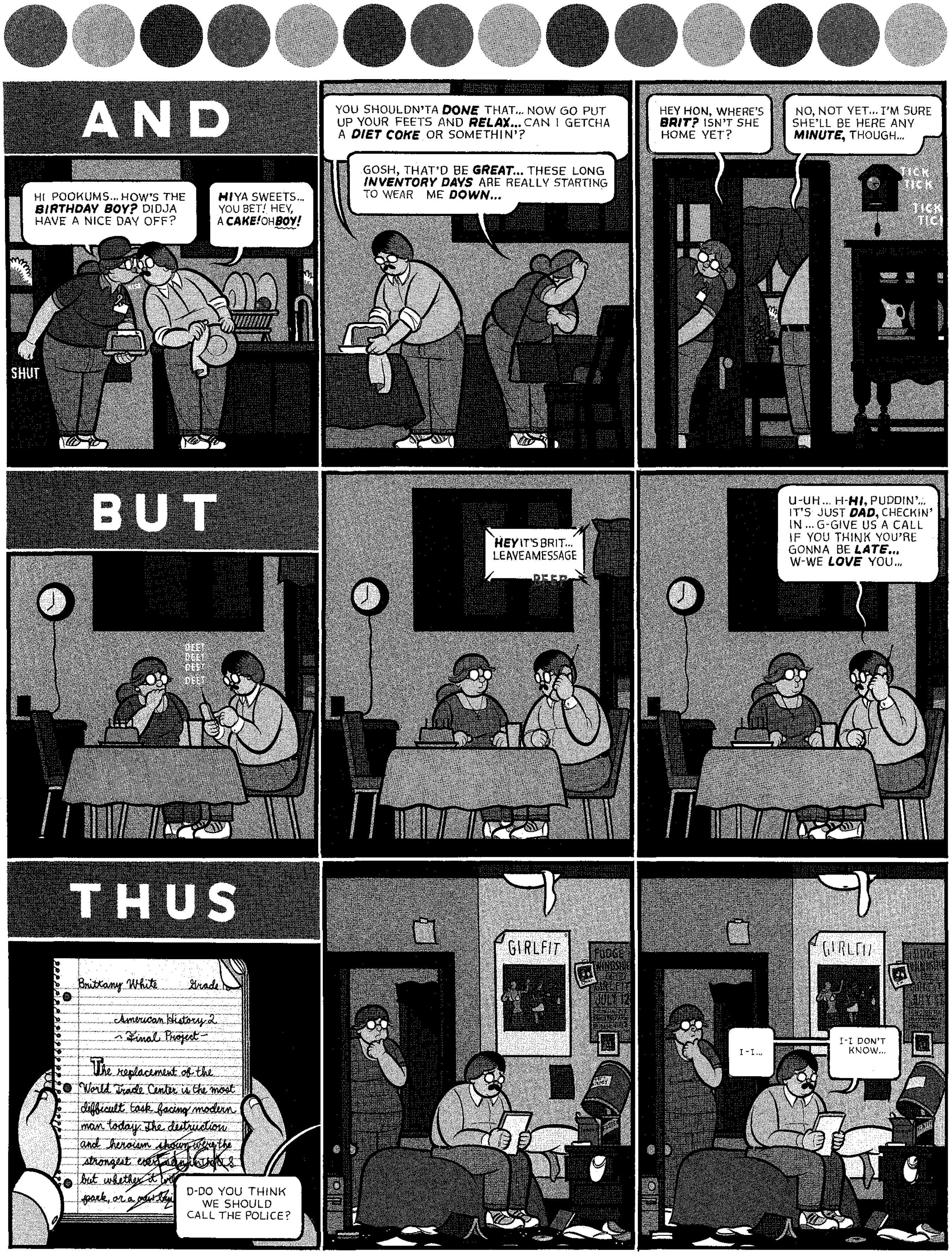
"I want the kind of poison that ants eat and then go and tell the other ants about."

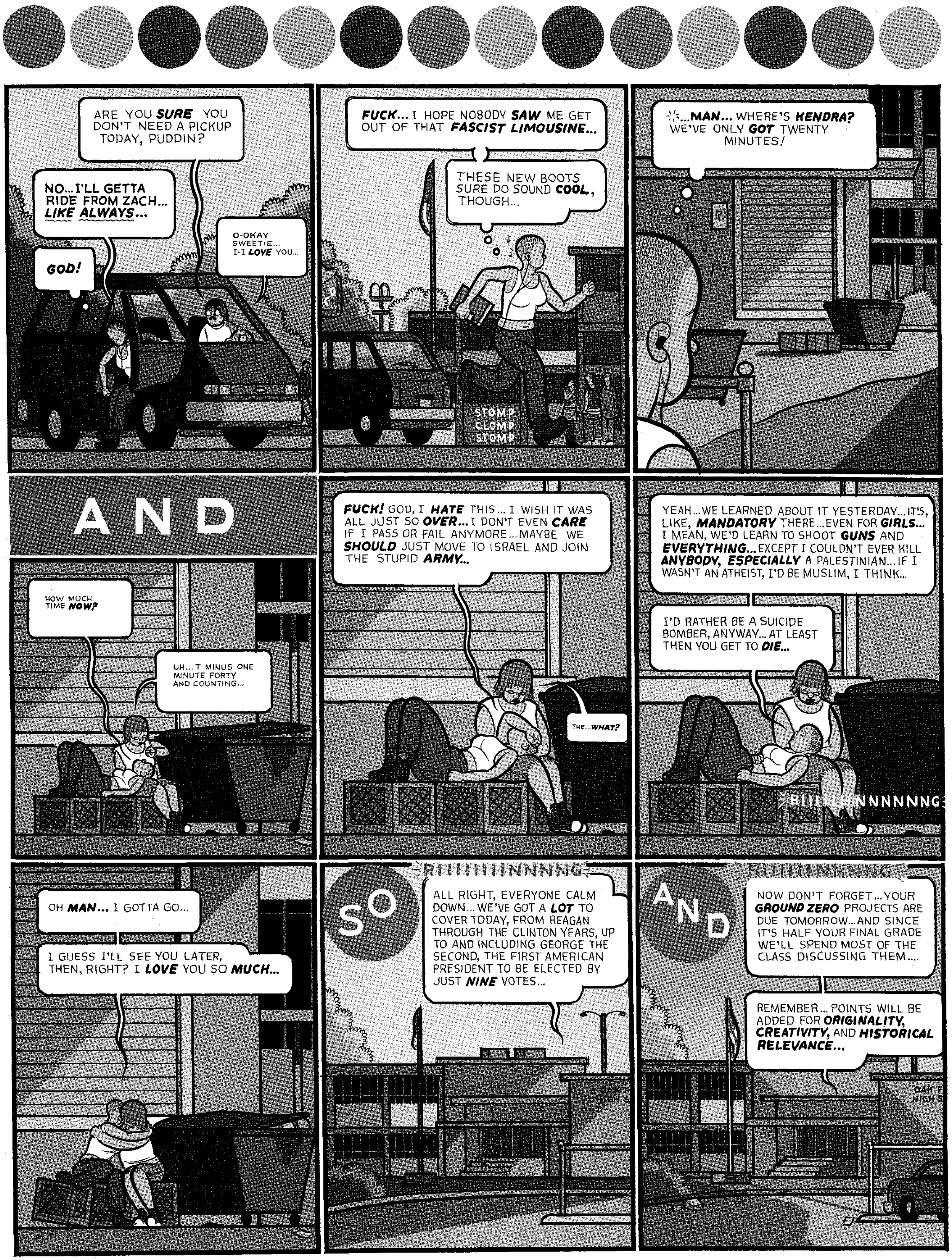
SITUATION COMEDY

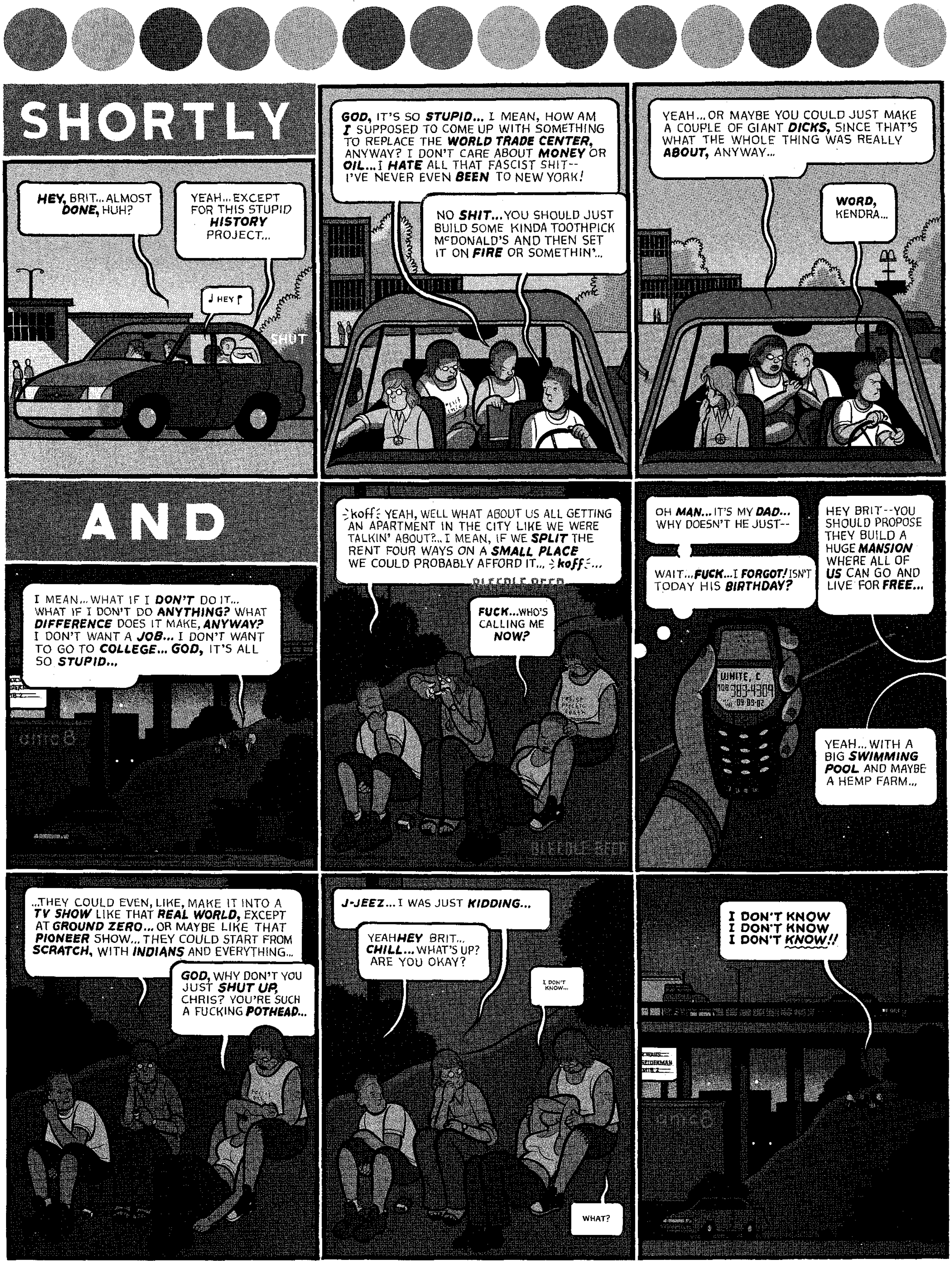
THESE NEW FALL COLORS DON'T RUN

BY CHRIS WARE

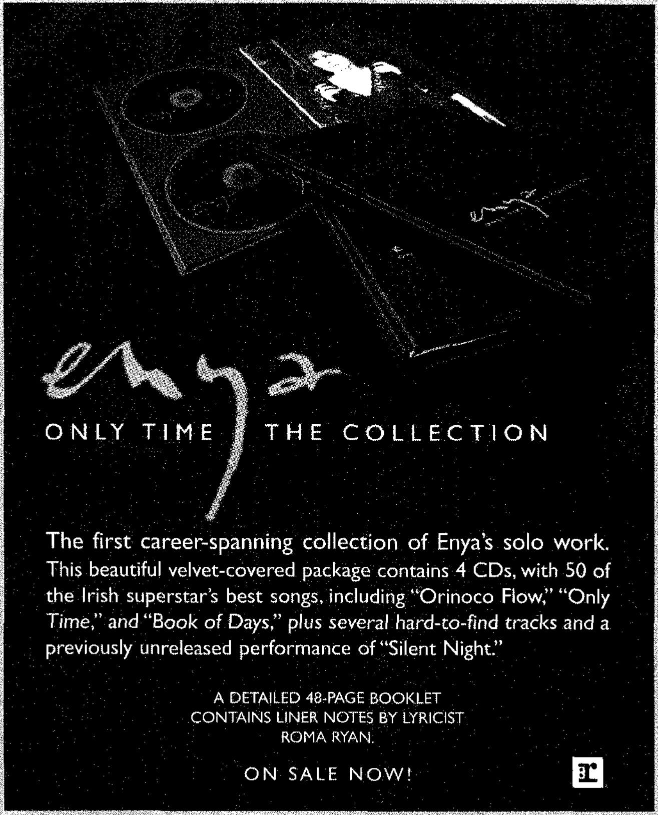

ARE YOU **SURE** YOU DON'T NEED A PICKUP TODAY, PUDDIN?
NO...I'LL GETTA RIDE FROM ZACH... ***LIKE ALWAYS...***
O-OKAY SWEETIE... I-I ***LOVE*** YOU...
⸗sigh⸗ THERE SHE GOES--MY LITTLE GIRL... HARD TO BELIEVE SHE'LL PROBABLY BE STARTING A FAMILY OF HER ***OWN*** IN A FEW YEARS...
⸗choke⸗ IT SEEMS LIKE ***YESTERDAY*** SHE WAS JUST A LITTLE BUNDLE IN MY ARMS... THINGS HAPPEN SO ***FAST...*** THERE'S JUST NOT ENOUGH TIME IN THE DAY... JUST NOT ENOUGH TIME IN THE ***DAY...***
DRIVE
LATER
SHORTLY
WELL I'LL ***BE...*** I DIDN'T KNOW SOLDIERS WERE SALUTING OUR PRESIDENT WITH MORE ***RESPECT*** THAN THAT ***LAST*** GUY... THAT ***IS*** REALLY SOMETHING! YA DARN ***RIGHT*** I'LL SEND THIS ONE ON... IT'S ALMOST AS GOOD AS THE ONE I GOT ***YESTERDAY...***
GUESS I SHOULD CHECK THE OL' "E-MAIL," EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT ***OFFICIALLY*** "ON THE CLOCK"...
TAK
"THIS CANDLE WAS LIT SEPTEMBER 11TH 2001... PLEASE PASS IT ON SO IT MAY BURN THAT MUCH MORE BRIGHTLY. OUR PRESIDENT NEEDS CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD TO BE PRAYING FOR HIM, 24/7..."
K-KLK
SO
GEE, OLD GLORY'S STARTING TO LOOK A BIT ***FADED...*** HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S ALREADY BEEN A ***YEAR...*** I GUESS I REALLY SHOULD REPLACE IT, BUT ***EVERY PENNY*** WE GET HAS TO GO INTO BRITTANY'S ***COLLEGE FUND...***
OH LORD PLEASE HELP HER TO ***PASS*** THIS SUMMER-SCHOOL CLASS...
⸗snf⸗ ALL THESE YEARS OF SAVING AND SACRIFICE... ⸗sigh⸗...BUT WE'RE BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE... WE'RE ***ALL*** BUILDING FOR THE ***FUTURE...***


AND
HI POOKUMS... HOW'S THE BIRTHDAY BOY? DIDJA HAVE A NICE DAY OFF?
HIYA SWEETS... YOU BET! HEY, A CAKE! OH BOY!
SHUT
YOU SHOULDN'TA DONE THAT... NOW GO PUT UP YOUR FEETS AND RELAX... CAN I GETCHA A DIET COKE OR SOMETHIN'?
GOSH, THAT'D BE GREAT... THESE LONG INVENTORY DAYS ARE REALLY STARTING TO WEAR ME DOWN...
HEY HON, WHERE'S BRIT? ISN'T SHE HOME YET?
NO, NOT YET... I'M SURE SHE'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE, THOUGH...
TICK TICK
TICK TIC
BUT
BEET BEET BEET BEET
HEY IT'S BRIT... LEAVE A MESSAGE
BEEP
U-UH... H-HI, PUDDIN'... IT'S JUST DAD, CHECKIN' IN... G-GIVE US A CALL IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE... W-WE LOVE YOU...
THUS
Brittany White Grade
American History 2
~ Final Project ~
The replacement of the World Trade Center is the most difficult task facing modern man today. The destruction and heroism shown were the strongest ever seen in the U.S. but whether it will park, or a new thi
FUCK
D-DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE?
GIRLFIT
JULY 12
I-I...
I-I DON'T KNOW...


ARE YOU **SURE** YOU DON'T NEED A PICKUP TODAY, PUDDIN?
NO...I'LL GETTA RIDE FROM ZACH... **LIKE ALWAYS...**
O-OKAY SWEETIE... I-I **LOVE** YOU...
GOD!
FUCK... I HOPE NOBODY **SAW** ME GET OUT OF THAT **FASCIST LIMOUSINE...**
THESE NEW BOOTS SURE DO SOUND **COOL**, THOUGH...
STOMP CLOMP STOMP
...**MAN...** WHERE'S **KENDRA?** WE'VE ONLY **GOT** TWENTY MINUTES!
AND
HOW MUCH TIME **NOW?**
UH...T MINUS ONE MINUTE FORTY AND COUNTING...
FUCK! GOD, I **HATE** THIS... I WISH IT WAS ALL JUST SO **OVER...** I DON'T EVEN **CARE** IF I PASS OR FAIL ANYMORE...MAYBE WE **SHOULD** JUST MOVE TO ISRAEL AND JOIN THE STUPID **ARMY...**
THE...**WHAT?**
YEAH...WE LEARNED ABOUT IT YESTERDAY...IT'S, LIKE, **MANDATORY** THERE...EVEN FOR **GIRLS...** I MEAN, WE'D LEARN TO SHOOT **GUNS** AND **EVERYTHING...**EXCEPT I COULDN'T EVER KILL **ANYBODY, ESPECIALLY** A PALESTINIAN...IF I WASN'T AN ATHEIST, I'D BE MUSLIM, I THINK...
I'D RATHER BE A SUICIDE BOMBER, ANYWAY...AT LEAST THEN YOU GET TO **DIE...**
RIIIIIIINNNNNG
OH **MAN...** I GOTTA GO...
I GUESS I'LL SEE YOU LATER, THEN, RIGHT? I **LOVE** YOU SO **MUCH...**
RIIIIIIINNNNNG
SO
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE CALM DOWN... WE'VE GOT A **LOT** TO COVER TODAY, FROM REAGAN THROUGH THE CLINTON YEARS, UP TO AND INCLUDING GEORGE THE SECOND, THE FIRST AMERICAN PRESIDENT TO BE ELECTED BY JUST **NINE** VOTES...
RIIIIIIINNNNNG
AND
NOW DON'T FORGET...YOUR **GROUND ZERO** PROJECTS ARE DUE TOMORROW...AND SINCE IT'S HALF YOUR FINAL GRADE WE'LL SPEND MOST OF THE CLASS DISCUSSING THEM...
REMEMBER...POINTS WILL BE ADDED FOR **ORIGINALITY, CREATIVITY,** AND **HISTORICAL RELEVANCE...**
OAK F HIGH S


SHORTLY
HEY, BRIT... ALMOST DONE, HUH?
YEAH... EXCEPT FOR THIS STUPID HISTORY PROJECT...
♩ HEY ♪
SHUT
GOD, IT'S SO STUPID... I MEAN, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING TO REPLACE THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, ANYWAY? I DON'T CARE ABOUT MONEY OR OIL... I HATE ALL THAT FASCIST SHIT-- I'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN TO NEW YORK!
NO SHIT... YOU SHOULD JUST BUILD SOME KINDA TOOTHPICK McDONALD'S AND THEN SET IT ON FIRE OR SOMETHIN'...
YEAH... OR MAYBE YOU COULD JUST MAKE A COUPLE OF GIANT DICKS, SINCE THAT'S WHAT THE WHOLE THING WAS REALLY ABOUT, ANYWAY...
WORD, KENDRA...
AND
I MEAN... WHAT IF I DON'T DO IT... WHAT IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE, ANYWAY? I DON'T WANT A JOB... I DON'T WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE... GOD, IT'S ALL SO STUPID...
cine 8
:koff: YEAH, WELL WHAT ABOUT US ALL GETTING AN APARTMENT IN THE CITY LIKE WE WERE TALKIN' ABOUT?... I MEAN, IF WE SPLIT THE RENT FOUR WAYS ON A SMALL PLACE WE COULD PROBABLY AFFORD IT... :koff:...
BLEEDLE BEEP
FUCK... WHO'S CALLING ME NOW?
BLEEDLE BEEP
OH MAN... IT'S MY DAD... WHY DOESN'T HE JUST--
WAIT... FUCK... I FORGOT! ISN'T TODAY HIS BIRTHDAY?
WHITE, C
383-4309
HEY BRIT--YOU SHOULD PROPOSE THEY BUILD A HUGE MANSION WHERE ALL OF US CAN GO AND LIVE FOR FREE...
YEAH... WITH A BIG SWIMMING POOL AND MAYBE A HEMP FARM...
...THEY COULD EVEN, LIKE, MAKE IT INTO A TV SHOW LIKE THAT REAL WORLD, EXCEPT AT GROUND ZERO... OR MAYBE LIKE THAT PIONEER SHOW... THEY COULD START FROM SCRATCH, WITH INDIANS AND EVERYTHING...
GOD, WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHUT UP, CHRIS? YOU'RE SUCH A FUCKING POTHEAD...
J-JEEZ... I WAS JUST KIDDING...
YEAH HEY BRIT... CHILL... WHAT'S UP? ARE YOU OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW I DON'T KNOW I DON'T KNOW!!
SPIDERMAN
cine 8

HOLIDAY GIFT GALLERY



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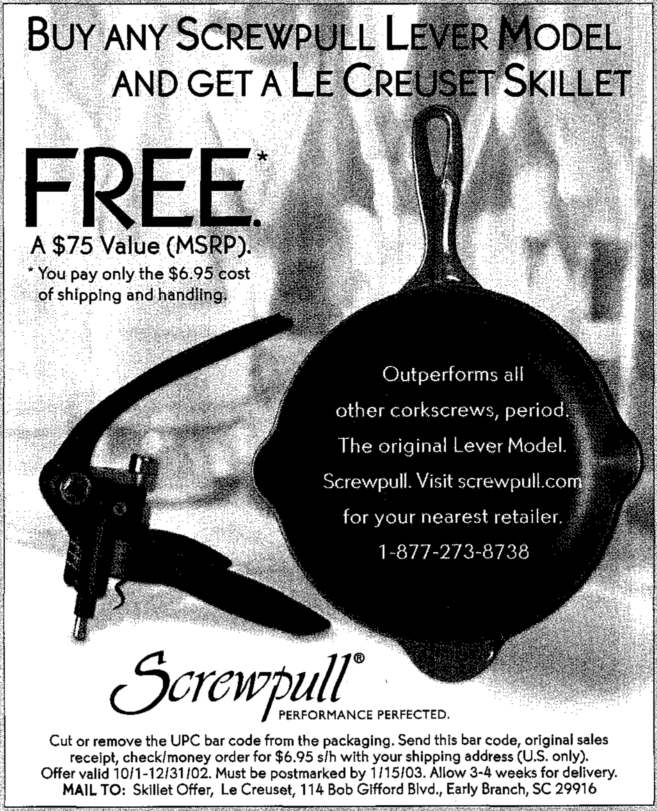

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Oct 9, 02
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Caitlin's birthday
9:30 Office manager's meeting
10:30
12:00 Lunch meeting with Teresa and Jerry
1:00
4:00 Pick up Reya from Karate
5:00
7:00 Attend back to school night: Parent/Teacher conference with Miss Mina
New
Details
Go to
ABC
123

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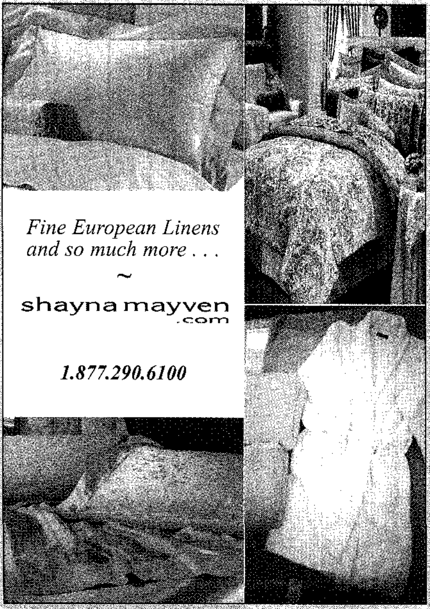

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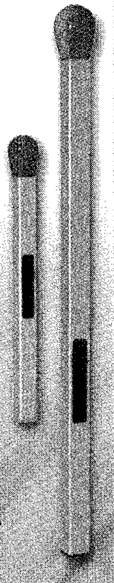

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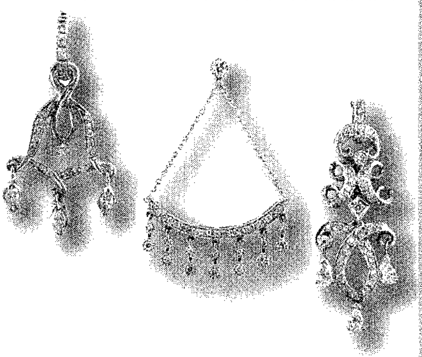

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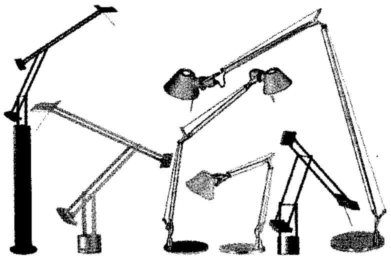

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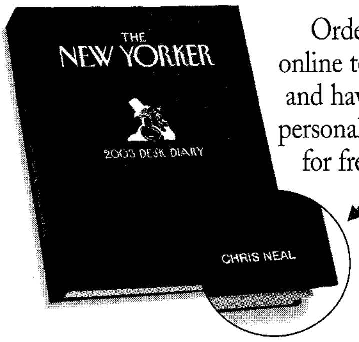

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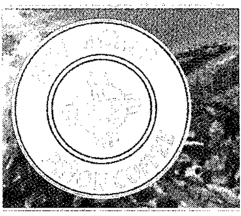

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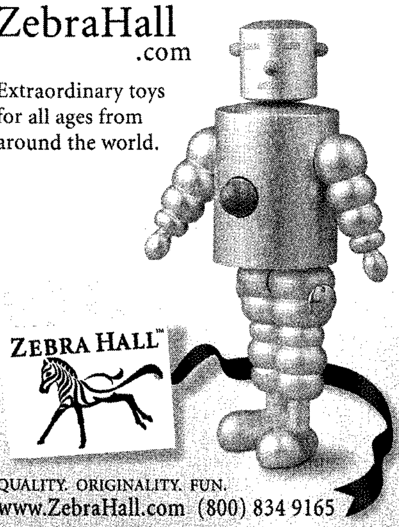

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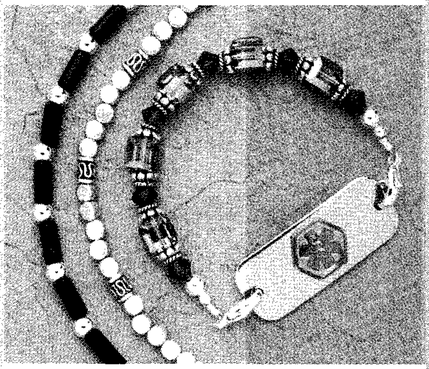

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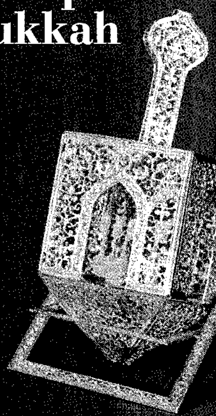

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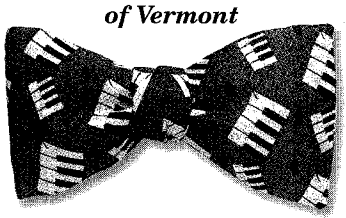

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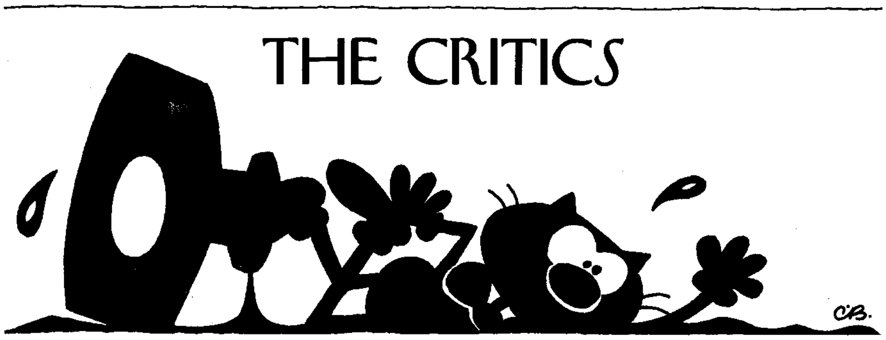

A CRITIC AT LARGE

UNDERWORLD

Herbert Asbury's irresistible histories.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

I went searching for the Five Points when I first came to New York, and couldn't find them anywhere. Not a single point left sticking up, it seemed, even in the thornier city of the early eighties. The Five Points, I knew from the book I clutched in my hand as I went looking, was an intersection of three downtown streets—Anthony, Orange, and Cross (later Worth, Baxter, and Park)—which formed five corners, and it had once been the legendary neighborhood of New York crime and New York criminals. These weren't the kind of criminals we had now but a more interesting sort, with neat names and great hats. It was the place where the Dead Rabbits and the Plug Uglies and the Shirt Tails had lived and fought, a place that had supported a life more engagingly violent than the mundanely violent city I had come to seemed able to entertain. But there was nothing—not a plaque, much less a point—to suggest where all that had been, and so I ate a Chinese lunch around the corner, and went home. (Even today, in the company of crack city historians, you can't get a clear answer about just where the Five Points were: just shrugs and vague gestures toward an area of concrete and park benches down near the Foley Square courthouse—somewhere around here, those points, all five of them.)

Like many another newcomer to New York, I was looking for the Five Points because I had been caught in the spell of what struck me as a really cool book, Herbert Asbury's "The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld," published in 1928, which I had found in a first edition in a second-hand bookstore on East Eighty-sixth Street. Its subject is the low life of New York during the nineteenth century, particularly the world of Five Points and the gangs that grew up there, and the dives they made, and the municipal riots of 1857, and the Draft Riots of 1863, which gets two chapters. "The Gangs of New York," which has recently been reissued in a paperback edition by Thunder's Mouth ($14.95), remains an incomparably incoherent, disorganized, and curiously enrapturing book.

The bookstore is gone now, as are most of the German restaurants that surrounded it, in what is still sometimes called Yorkville, and this gives, perhaps, the first clue to the spell cast by Asbury's book: "Gangs" provided a New York romantic with something that wasn't otherwise in evidence—a richly feudal and ritualistic past. (And newcomers to New York are romantics, or they wouldn't have come.) In its raffish invocation of a lost subculture, it seemed heart-lifting, thrilling, even if the more sober parts of your mind knew that Asbury's violent criminals were no different from the violent criminals who were still around to make your life miserable.

Not long after I bought the book, I found that it was the center of a cult. Copies changed hands with the excitement of Dylan bootlegs; my copy changed hands and stayed there. Although Asbury's book is local, its spell was not provincial. It was intense enough to reach all the way down south to Jorge Luis Borges in Buenos Aires, who one would have thought had plenty of violent urban mythology of his own to contemplate without need of a transfusion from lower Manhattan. In 1933, Borges wrote a feverish short story inspired by "The Gangs of New York," a slice of which appears as a foreword in the new paperback version.

On the set of Martin Scorsese's "Gangs of Ne

ork”: Dominiquie Vandenberg, Nevan Finnegan, Stephen Graham, and Leonardo DiCaprio. Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

“The Gangs of New York” also cast its spell on the young Martin Scorsese, and, after twenty-five years of trying, he has at last been able to make it into a movie—a small, easily overlooked art film, with a few unknown actors—which will come out any day now.

But before the movie appears and overwhelms its source, let us spare a thought for Herbert Asbury. “Gangs,” read today, remains an irresistible book, which is not the same thing as a first-rate or entirely conscientious one, and Asbury an irresistible figure, which is not the same thing as a first-rate or entirely conscientious writer. Asbury’s admirers think that his work offers something better than the truth, better than a chronicle, something almost accidentally modern—a kind of surrealist collage of the city’s secret history. The writer Luc Sante, whose own hymn to New York criminal history, “Low Life,” draws upon Asbury, praises it by saying that it “owns a direct

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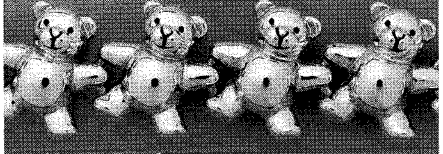

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pipeline to the city's unconscious," which doesn't sound like the same thing as saying that it's true.

In fact, "Gangs," twenty years later, seems not so much cool as just weird—a lurid muddle of largely unrelated incidents and mixed-up events, extending over a century, and bound together by crime or violence of one kind or another. There are riots, whorehouses, gambling, and gang warfare. If you applied Asbury's principle of organization to a "Gangs of New York, Part 2," about the twentieth-century underworld, you'd end up with chapters on Murder Inc., the Warriors and the Jets and the Sharks, Dion and the Belmonts, the making of "West Side Story," the life of John Gotti, the blackout looting of 1977, the Son of Sam murders, the Mayflower Madam, and the Broadway failure of "The Capeman." It would be quite a book, though what it would be a history of is hard to say.

But then "lurid muddle" is just a grouch's way of saying "surrealist collage." Asbury's book is a tribute to the magical power of naming: long stretches of "Gangs" are taken up by lists of gangs and villains and even fire engines, and, like the lists of ships in the Iliad, they are essential to the effect. We are stirred by Hell-Cat Maggie of the Dead Rabbits, who "filed her front teeth to points, while on her fingers she wore long artificial nails, constructed of brass," and by "the celebrated dancer Sontag, who had set the town by the ears with her short skirts and the abandoned fling of her gifted feet—she is said to have been the first woman in America who, in public at least, kicked higher than her head" (as she goes on doing). But what stirs us most are those lists. We like knowing that there were Dead Rabbits even more than we like knowing who danced for them. We read of Daybreak Boys, Buckoos, Hookers, Swamp Angels, Slaughter Housers, Short Tails, Patsy Conroys, and the Border Gang, of Chichesters, Roach Guards, Plug Uglies, and Shirt Tails, and we melt.

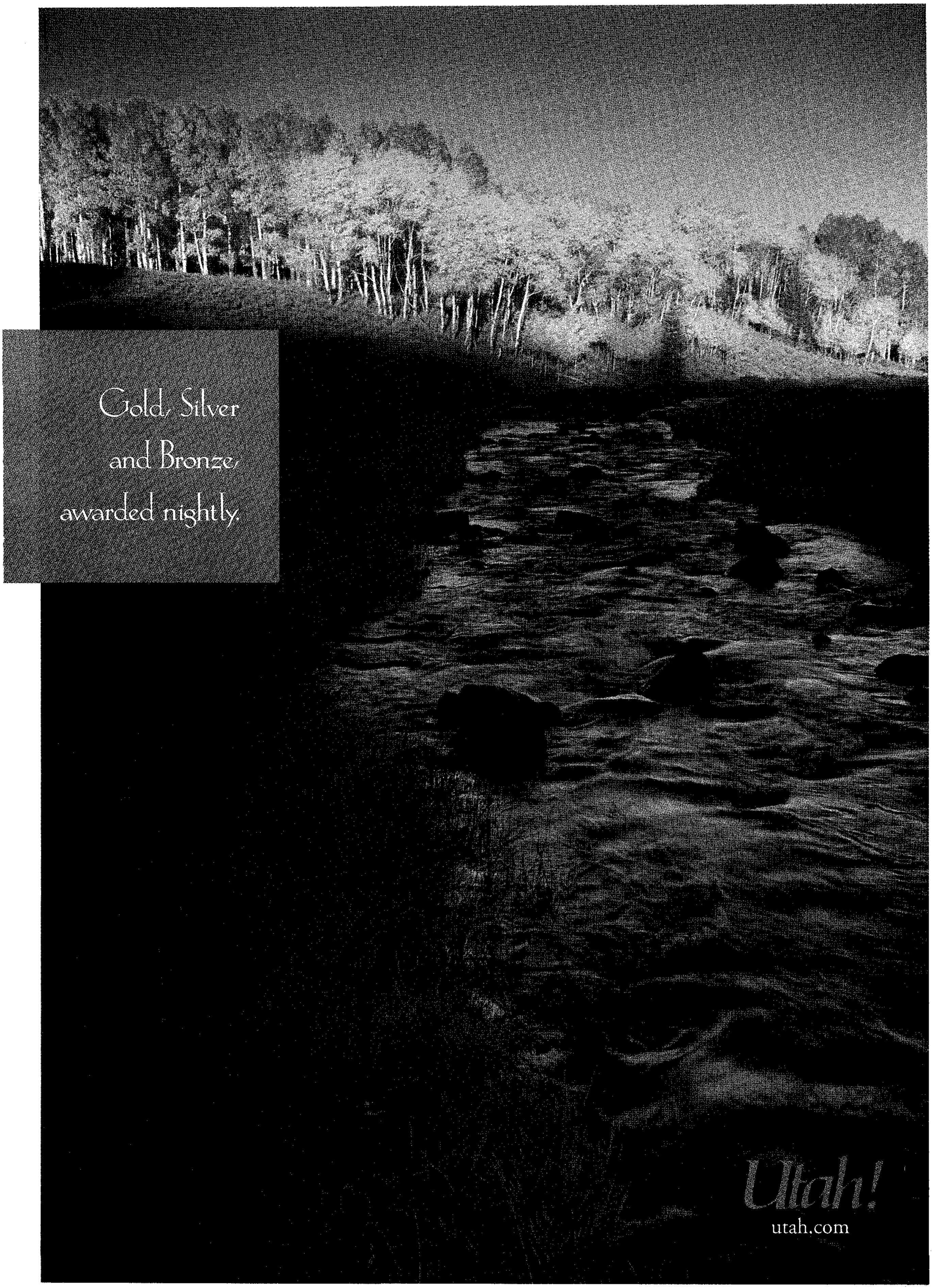
That epic power of naming is no doubt part of the appeal of "Gangs" for Martin Scorsese, whose subject has always been the survival of feudal codes and virtues among commercial ones. His Jake La Motta is a cockroach redeemed by courage and fatalism; his Mean Streets mugs and Goodfellas are not Coppola's Verdi-worthy dons but small-time thugs redeemed by their tribal sociability. (This is what made him such a brilliant interpreter of Edith Wharton, since Wharton's subject, too, was the survival of feudal codes of honor in the commercial society of New York, although she gets the opposite end of that particular stick.) "America Was Born in the Streets" is the slogan of the new movie, which is true only if the streets we have in mind are Wall Street and Madison Avenue. Yet we are vulnerable to the idea all the same.

By giving this idea a literary form, Asbury became a low-life chronicler with a high-end purpose. Though the Asbury we now prize is the wide-eyed romantic of the streets, a run through his books and his life suggests a buried irony even in this accomplishment. Asbury was, in his day, a famously disabused realist of the saloons, an enemy of glamour and romance of every kind. He soldiered in the cause of cynicism, and ended up, as American writers often do, a romantic in spite of himself.

No biography exists of Asbury, but one of his descendants, Frances Carle, maintains a Web site in his honor and is apparently working on a semi-official life. A quick tour of a card catalogue shows that "The Gangs of New York" was far from Asbury's only book about crime and criminals. That subtitle, "An Informal History," was something of an Asbury trademark. "The Gangs of New York" was succeeded by "Gem of the Prairie," an ironically titled "informal history" of crime in Chicago (just re-released, opportunistically, as "The Gangs of Chicago"); "The Barbary Coast," an informal history of crime in San Francisco; "Sucker's Progress," an informal history of gambling in America; and "The French Quarter," an informal history of low life in New Orleans.

But before Asbury turned to crime he wrote a book called "Up from Methodism"—a title that resonates with anyone who has read much in the Mencken-Millay period in American letters. Published by a young Alfred A. Knopf in 1926, it is an American equivalent of Samuel Butler's "The Way of All Flesh," on which it is obviously modelled.

Reading it, you see that Asbury was, above all, a realist, and in the Amer-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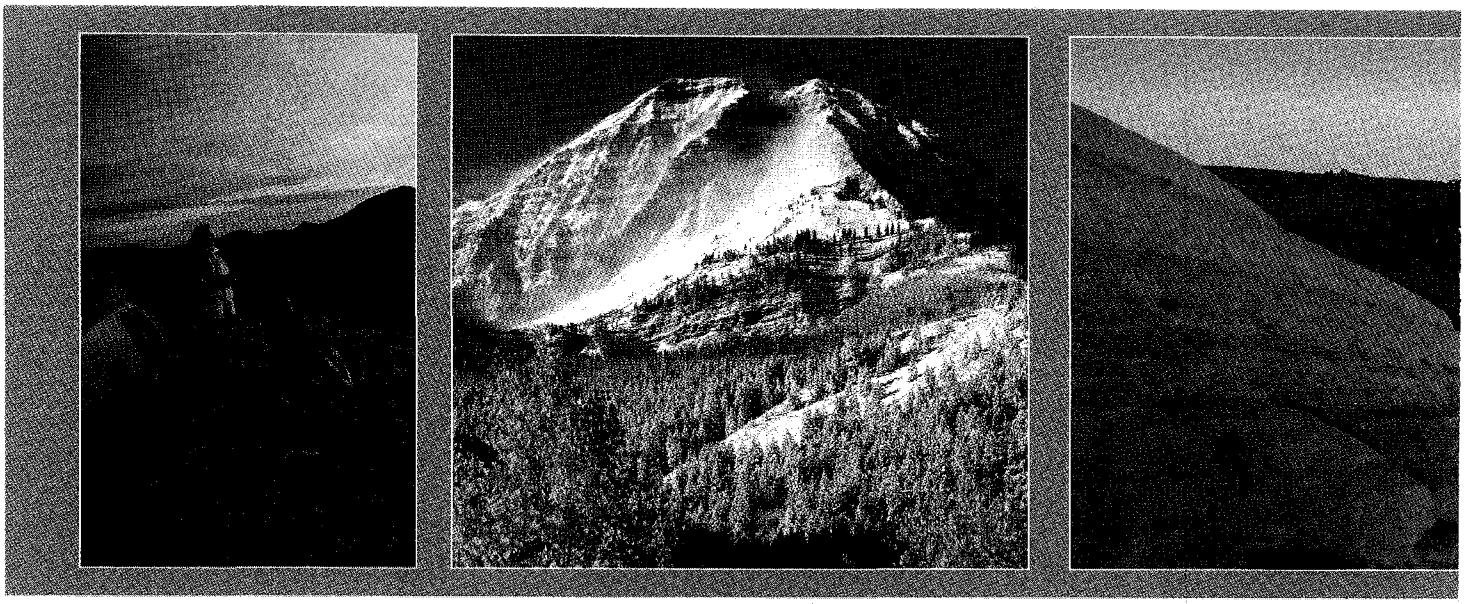

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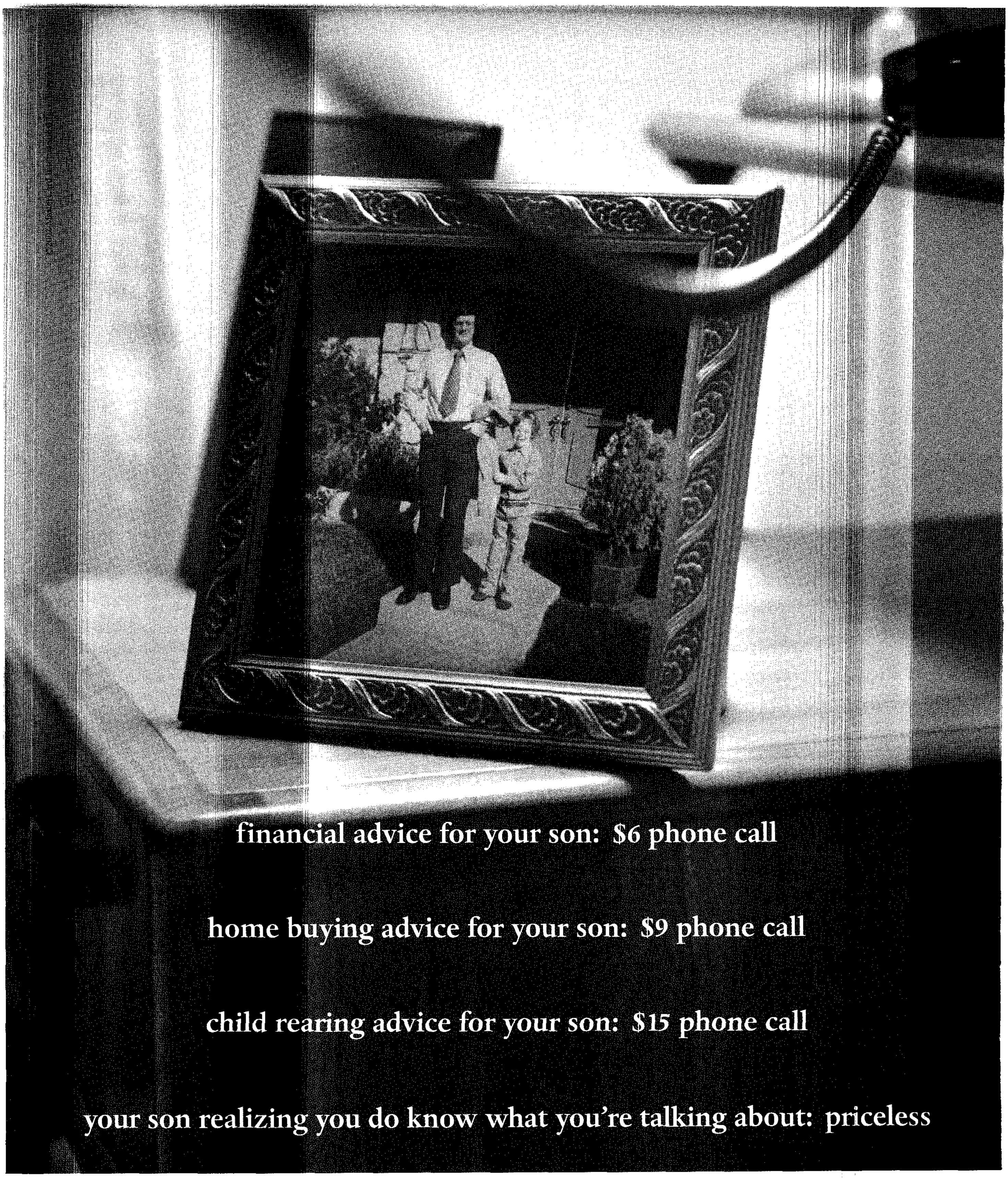

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ican sense; that is, a man who wants to annoy his relatives. He was born in 1889 in Farmington, Missouri, and was the son of a city clerk. His grandfather and great-grandfather and great-great-uncle were all Methodist ministers. (The great-great-uncle was Francis Asbury, the first Methodist bishop in America, who gave his name to Bruce Springsteen's Asbury Park.) "Up from Methodism" tells of an intelligent, sensitive boy brought up in a narrowly respectable religious family, who comes to see that the God-fearing impulse that governed his family's life was nakedly hypocritical, self-seeking, and, worse still, mean-spirited, even in its supposedly spiritual moments. Long out of print (though surely it is just the kind of small, difficult "classic" that the Library of America exists to preserve), "Up from Methodism" is bracing to read and far more courageous in its attack on American religion than any book today would easily be allowed to be. (Today, it's acceptable to attack religious people only for failing to be religious—molesting kids or shopping for real estate—not for trying to be religious and succeeding.) "Up from Methodism" is dedicated to Stanley Walker, the legendary city editor of the *Herald Tribune*, but its tone is right out of Mencken, who published a chunk of it in *The American Mercury* in 1926.

"Joy," in its absence, is the key word in the book, and no book of the period, not even Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street," chronicles the joyless world of respectable provincial life with more disgust. Hypocrisy is the vice that Asbury hates most and saw most clearly:

> It seemed impossible for Preachers or devout Brothers to say "virgin" as casually as they did other words; they gloated over it, toyed with it, rolled it about their tongues and tasted the full flavor of it before it slid drippingly from their lips with an amazing clarity of pronunciation. Usually they accompanied it with a doleful sigh. I thought then that the sign was from excess of piety, and I thought that their eyes shone and their breath came a little faster from the same cause, that these things were possibly manifestations of God, and I was greatly impressed. But I am older now and I know better.

The most famous chapter of the book tells the story of Hatrack, the local tart, who takes men into the cemeteries for sex and then tries to come to church to atone on Sundays:

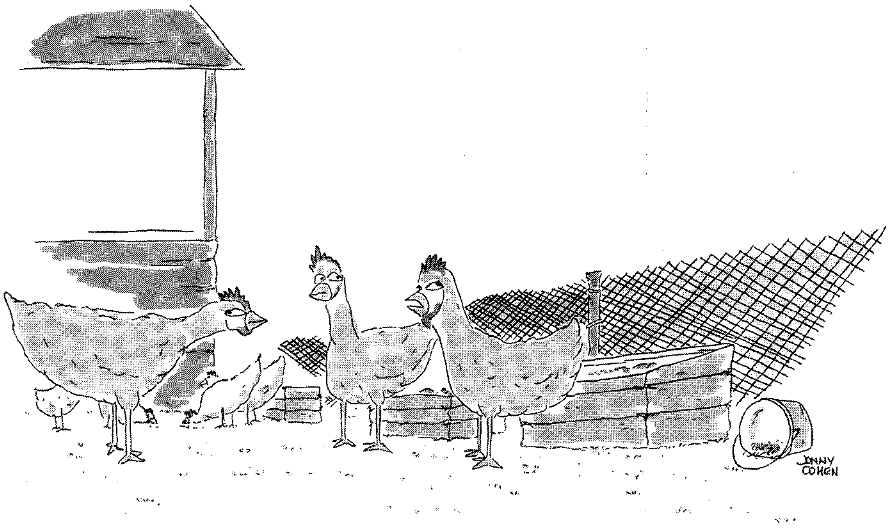
> She was not wanted in the House of God. I have seen her sit alone and miserably unhappy while the Preacher bellowed a sermon about forgiveness with the whole church rocking to a chorus of sobbing, moaning amens as he told the stories of various Biblical harlots, and how God had forgiven them.
>
> But for Hatrack there was no forgiveness. Mary Magdalene was a saint in Heaven, but Hatrack remained a harlot in Farmington. Every Sunday night for years she went through the same procedure. She was hopeful always that someone would speak to her and make a place for her, that the Brothers and Sisters who talked so volubly about the grace and the mercy of God would offer her some of the religion that they dripped so freely over everyone else in town. But they did not, and so she went back down the street to the Post Office, swishing her skirts and brazenly offering herself to all who desired her.

When this was published in *The American Mercury*, it was duly banned in Boston; Mencken went north from Baltimore to sell copies on Boston Common, got himself arrested, and won the court case. It was, with the "Ulysses" decision, a landmark in the assault on American censorship.

One might have expected Asbury to go on writing memoirs in the same disabused vein or, perhaps, to become a novelist in the Lewis-Dreiser-Sinclair manner. But his background was in the newspaper business. He had got his big start at the Atlanta *Georgian*, a Hearst paper that used Hearst techniques, although it occasionally did good works ("What can be said of a God who employs a Hearst newspaper as His instrument?" Asbury asked after the *Georgian* helped reform the state's child-labor laws), and he eventually made his way onto the *Herald Tribune*. Later, he wrote a regular column about New York underworld lore for this magazine, from 1927 to 1933, when Harold Ross was still hoping for a roguish, rakish magazine instead of the one he got. This made him a near-contemporary of Joseph Mitchell and A. J. Liebling, and Asbury has a certain amount in common with both: a taste for freakish low life in the first case and an appetite for rascals in the second.

The suppressed history of American life was what Asbury landed on after the success of "Up from Methodism," and when he came to write "The Gangs of New York," two years later, his intent was not to intoxicate with tales of a lost romantic Gotham but to disintoxicate us with tales of brutality and violence. He didn't think that America was born in the streets. He just thought that streetwalkers were born in America, and that attention should be paid to the fact. This was well understood at the time; Carl Van Doren, reviewing "Gangs," wrote, "Asbury's underworld is an underworld, and not a region of heroes. The stage and the screen will look to it in vain for the broken-hearted gentlemen who turn to crime out of a frustrated goodness, and there, practice honor among thieves, punctilio towards their victims, and eloquence upon the world at large." Where the reformer Jacob Riis had found pathos in the poverty of Five Points, Asbury found something drier and more vigorous. That was life as it is and always will be, he said, in effect, and give me an honest whorehouse over a Methodist chapel any day of the week.

After 1928, and for the next twenty years, Asbury embarked on what seems



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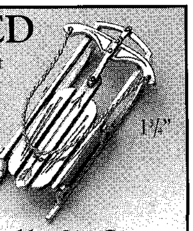

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in retrospect an extraordinary mission: to document the entire underworld of America, from East Coast to West, and from New Orleans to San Francisco. It was a kind of bottom-up history that would not become academically acceptable, much less voguish, for half a century. His studies of gambling, of the racial politics of the New Orleans French Quarter, and of the history of Chicago crime remain monuments to an ambition that was then confined to the fringes of pop history. "Sucker's Progress," his history of gambling and swindling in America, is dense with facts about a subject that one would have thought persisted only as rumor and tall tale, so much so that there are moments when one suspects that one is being had:

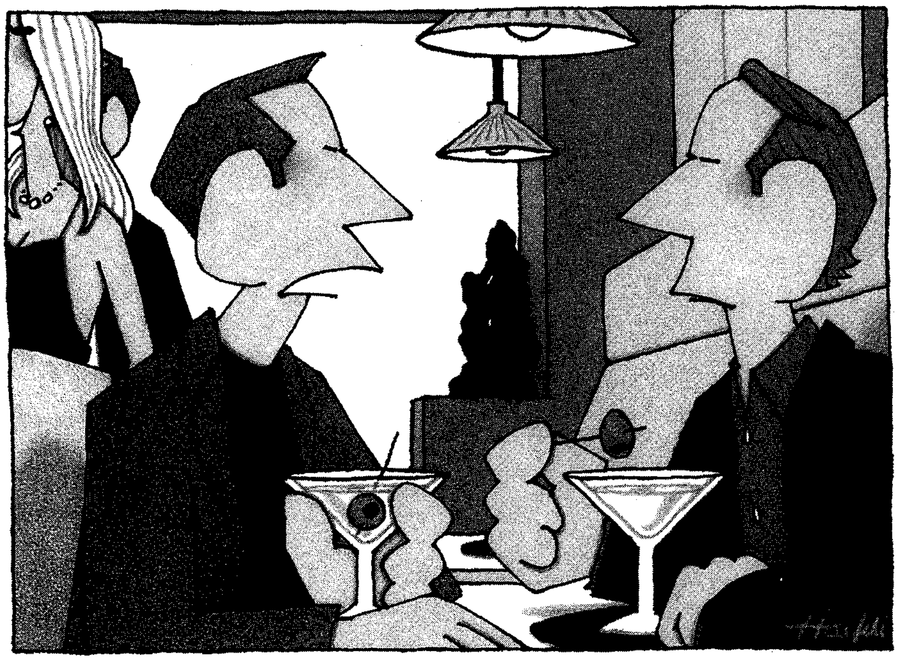
> During the period [post-Civil War] in which the professional gambler was establishing himself in New York, Washington and other cities of the Atlantic seaboard, his brethren who had pursued the wandering sucker up the Western rivers and across the Alleghenies were spreading throughout the valleys of the Ohio and the upper Mississippi. . . . Cincinnati, St. Louis, and especially Chicago were the great centers of mid-Western gambling, but at various times from about 1850 to the early 1890's Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Paul and Minneapolis enjoyed more than local renown. . . . Of lesser importance, but still more widely known than the average town, were Cleveland and Fort Wayne, Ind. Cleveland produced one gambler of national stature in George Randall, who owned two hells there and one in Saratoga; but the city's reputation among sporting men was due almost entirely to the sweat shop conditions which prevailed in its half dozen resorts.

How did he know all that, one wonders? That someone might know, in 1938, that Fort Wayne fell just behind Indianapolis as a center of vice in the eighteen-seventies strikes one as just within the reach of the diligent scholar—but the national stature of George Randall? The answer, in part, is that Asbury knew that it was so because other newspapermen had said that it was so. In the bibliographies of Asbury's books, there are always references to older popular histories of low life ("Jack Pots; Stories of the Great American Game," and so forth) and usually a large, sweeping reference to "newspapers in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, Baltimore, Boston," and on and on. His crime histories are, in plain English, usually glorified clip jobs—not so careful assemblages of what other newspaper writers had to say about tabloid characters in their day. This is perfectly sound, of course—you don't turn to the *Congressional Record* to find out how one cheated at faro in a dive in St. Joe in '49—but it is also responsible for the more than occasional longueurs in Asbury's books.

The method is responsible for his occasional mistakes as well. It turns out, for instance, that the Dead Rabbits gang that plays so large a role in "Gangs," both book and movie, may never have actually existed. The historian Tyler Anbinder, in his fine "Five Points," published last year, explains that "the neighborhood residents who supposedly composed the ranks of the 'Dead Rabbits' were unanimous in their insistence that no gang by that name existed." The notion that it did apparently involved a misunderstanding about the nature of the 1857 riots. (Anbinder also points out that the Draft Riots—which form the climax of the Scorsese movie—had little to do with Five Points, and were largely an uptown pogrom against free blacks.)

The real problem with Asbury's chronicles of American low life is not that the wrong things happen but that not much happens at all. This is in part because Asbury, though he had a great gift for polishing his material, had no gift for dramatizing it (as the adapters of "Gangs of New York" seem to have discovered; there are four of them listed, which by Hollywood rule of thumb means at least seven) and in part because, in concentrated doses, low life is—well, as dull as sin. There are only so many ways to shuffle the deck, even when you are dealing from the bottom. The whorehouses (or sporting parlors) in "The Gangs of New York" seem indistinguishable from the ones in "Gem of the Prairie," which are hard to tell apart from the ones in "The Barbary Coast"; the Chicago gangs, though they have less redolent names, do more or less the same things that the New York ones do, and when the "miscreant" comes at last "to meet his maker on the scaffold" the mise en scène is always the same. (Crowd, preacher, seeming indifference, drop.)

In fact, the most Borgesian thing about Asbury was that he must have lived in a library. The prerequisite for producing several thousand pages on low life over twenty years is the ability to read several thousand pages on low life over twenty



"I have two children from a previous sexuality."

• •

years. Unlike Mitchell and Liebling, who went out and found their low life—even if they then shaped it in their own image, inward-turning and melancholic, or genial and literate—Asbury put little in his work to suggest that he ever found out at first hand about vice. He must have, but it doesn't show. In his crime histories, he rarely mentions a firsthand contemporary source, even when, as in the case of the later Chicago stuff, what he's writing about is more or less contemporary. Like any good Methodist, he got his faith out of a book.

Asbury lived until 1963, but he stopped writing, or writing seriously, in the early fifties. His books went through a solid period of neglect for almost twenty years, until, in the late seventies, readers in search of a romantic diversion began to pick them up again. Which takes us back to Five Points.

When Asbury was rediscovered, it was not as a dour and encyclopedic realist but as a vivid and surreal romantic, the epic poet of the street gang. What happened between the thirties and the seventies, when the cult of "Gangs" emerged, to send innocents downtown in search of last century's dives? The answer has something to do with the changing demographics of freelance crime. Once you have hosed off the blood, Asbury's "The Gangs of New York" is basically a story about Irish immigrants in New York; the gangs are almost exclusively Irish, and by the latter half of the twentieth century the Irish were the establishment. They were, literally, the cops. (Of course, there are Irishmen in the Mafia—De Niro did a good job as one of them in "GoodFellas"—but they are like Jews in pro sports, exciting exceptions.) This meant that you could moon over their romantic past, just as the Irish themselves, back in the nineteenth century, mooned over the imaginary romantic past of Cuchulain and the rest.

But the larger answer has to do with the needs of the American imagination. Lacking an epic past of honor and glory, we have to make it up out of whatever we find lying around on the street. Even Asbury, who didn't intend to be part of this operation—he intended, if anything, to be part of the opposite, the salty debunking tradition—got drafted to do it. The same imaginative process that turned Mark Twain's dreary little town into a dreamy American pastoral, and Ring Lardner's mean-minded ballplayers into lovable innocents, turns Asbury's small-time crooks into our long-lost fathers. As their objects vanish, American realists are made to act like romantics. We gang up on them until they do. ♦

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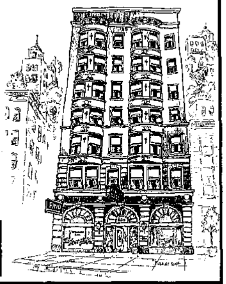

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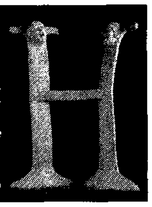

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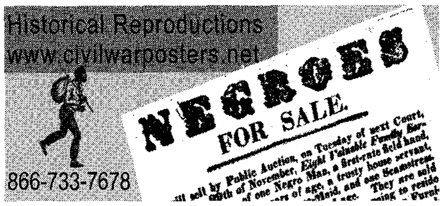

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BOOKS

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

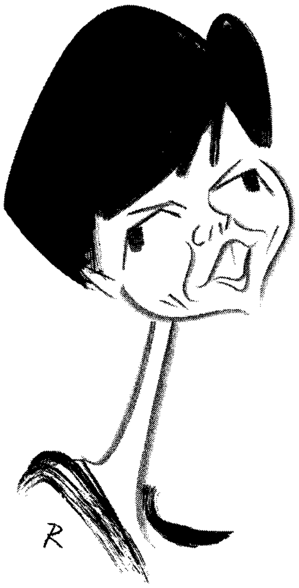
A novel of loss.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Reading Alice McDermott's new novel, "Child of My Heart" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23), we know that a child is going to die—the book is strewn with omens—but we don't know which one. Could it be Theresa? She is our narrator, looking back on a summer she spent, as she tells us in her opening sentence, taking care of "four dogs, three cats, the Moran kids; Daisy, my eight-year-old cousin; and Flora, the toddler child of a local artist." The time is the sixties; the place is the North Shore of Long Island. In the story, Theresa is fifteen, nubile, and precocious. "Send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die," she says, quoting Eustacia Vye. (She is reading "The Return of the Native.") She may get her wish, though not in the form she imagines. As Flora's father, the "local artist," fingers Theresa's thigh, we cringe. But she can't die, we figure. She's our narrator—hence still alive, presumably.

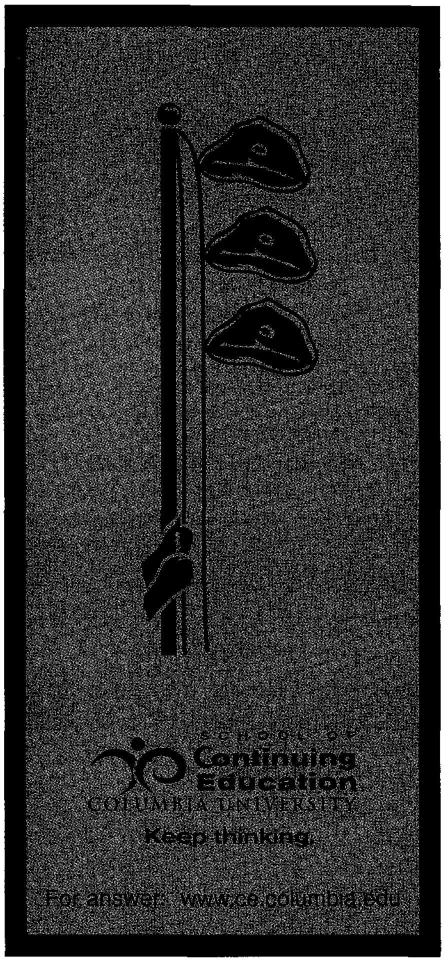
Failing her, the Moran children seem ripe for woe. There are five of them, and no father in sight. All that the Morans have is a mother who divides her time between having sex with the local cop and fighting with her dipsomaniac father. In the Morans' house, next door to Theresa's, screams are heard, doors slam. The children are later found "in the road, on our lawn, across our back steps, like the detritus of some explosion."

Another endangered child is Flora, the little girl whom Theresa is babysitting. Early in the book, Flora's mother leaves town, not without first saying to Theresa, "If my husband tries to fuck you while I'm gone, don't be frightened. He's an old man, and he drinks. Chances are it will be brief." Flora's father is an Abstract Expressionist, something like a Jackson Pollock grown old and rich and discouraged. He does indeed drink, starting in the morning, and he's already bedding the maid. While they are at their business, Flora could easily toddle down the lawn of her family's beachfront property and float away. At one point, Theresa speaks of swimming in the ocean with Flora: "In the rush of bubbles and green water and the sudden underwater silence, I looked at her to see that she was looking at me, eyes wide open, face serene, pale hair floating, looking for all the world like something not yet born but fully formed, something plump and otherworldly, angelic and human, iridescent, milky white." She seems already dead, transfigured.


Alice McDermott

ROBERT RISKO

But the most obvious candidate for trouble is Daisy, the daughter of Theresa's Uncle Jack, who is a transit cop, and Aunt Peg. They have eight children; they could afford to lose one. When Daisy arrives on the train—with a piece of torn brown paper, giving her name and address, safety-pinned to her dress—she has bruises on her body. Has she been beaten? At one point, she and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Theresa are puzzling over one of Flora's father's paintings. "It's a picture of something broken," Daisy says. "Something you sort of expected to break, but you still wish it hadn't. You still think maybe it won't." Daisy, to a T.

But "Child of My Heart" is not a mystery story. It's a bildungsroman, a novel of the growth of the imagination. Theresa is not afraid of Flora's father. She is fascinated by him or, rather, by what he does for a living. She knows what art is—making up the world out of your own head, she says—and she wants to do it, too. In fact, she already is doing it. Sensing the danger around her, she invents fanciful tales to cheer up the children she is caring for and—she firmly believes she can do this—to alter their fate, to save them. Daisy has a pair of tacky pink shoes, studded with blue rhinestones. She adores them. Yes, Theresa says, they are marvellous; furthermore, they will change to different, beautiful colors as Daisy's life changes. She tells Daisy and Flora that there was once a girl in France, named Bernadette, who saw the Virgin Mary in a grotto. And now, she says, the water from that grotto has magical powers: "When crying babies drink it in their bottles, they begin to smile, and all their tears turn into lovely jewels that their mothers pluck from their cheeks and put into rings and necklaces and bracelets, some even glue them to their shoes."

That's for Daisy. For Flora, whose undeservedly adored mother has decamped to New York City, Theresa invents a game in which they build a replica of the city out of construction paper. Meanwhile, she tells a story about it:

> And then Flora's mother would walk up the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and through the hushed marbled rooms until she came to the special place where Flora's father's painting was. And a guard would unhook the thick velvet rope, and she would walk into the beautiful room, all marble and gold and quiet as a church, and there would be Flora, in a painting as long and as wide as her father's arms. Flora in a white dress, framed in gold.

Again, this is not art for art's sake. Theresa is trying to tell these children that they really are safe—that their par-

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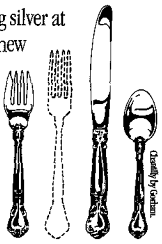

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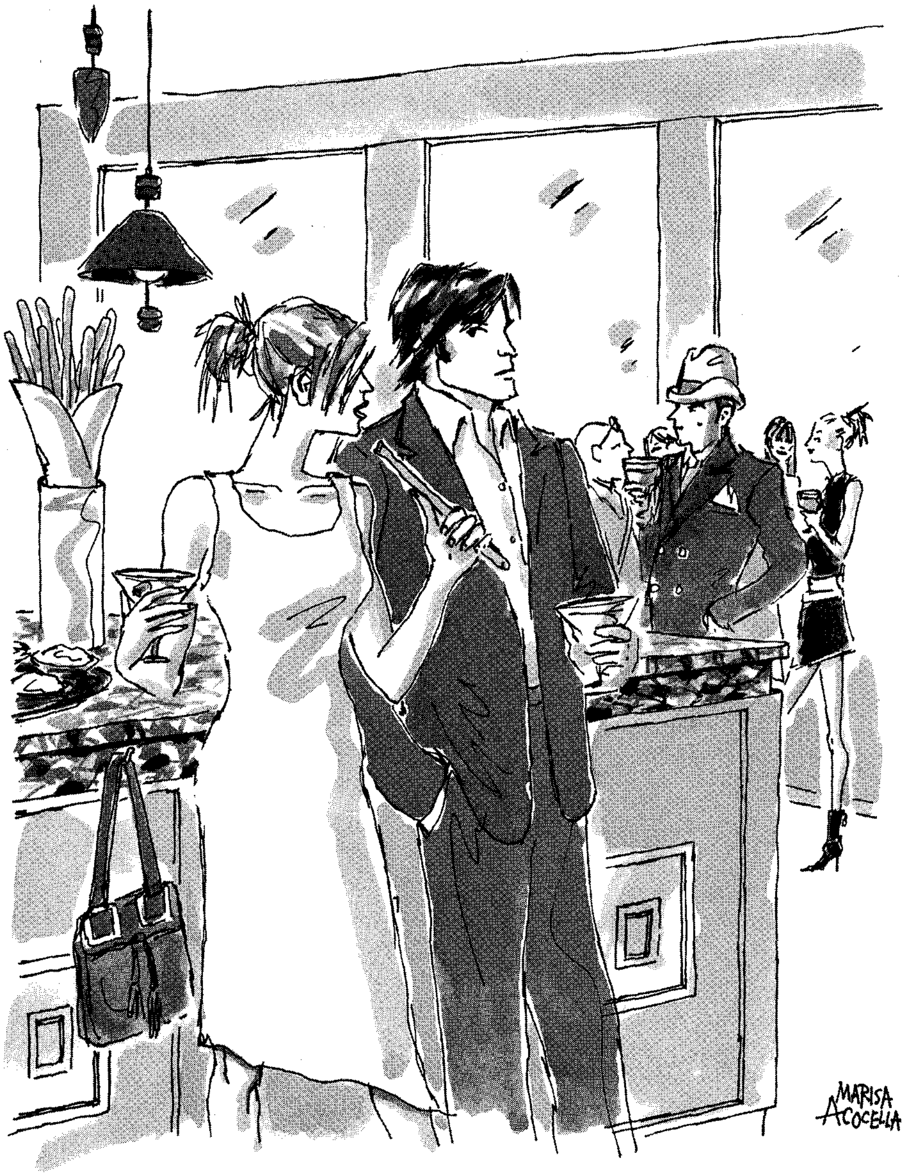

"When you're finished not looking at her, can you divert your non-attention to me?"

• •

ents love them and will take care of them. It's not true, though, and Theresa seems to know this. Her Metropolitan Museum sounds a lot like a mausoleum.

The melding of the two themes, doom and imagination, is a little strange, and it becomes more strange as a third theme is added: sex. Theresa's adolescent eroticism casts a spell on the whole novel. For want of someone to relieve her of her virginity, she is constantly making half-love to the children in her care. She is just trying to comfort them, but the petting gets heavy. She bathes her charges, nestles with them in bed, rubs Noxzema on their sunburns at length. Her body is at their disposal. The children press their weeping faces to it. They fasten their mouths to her skin, touch her hair to their lips. This is not to speak of what the local fathers want to do with her. (Flora's father is not the only one.) But in this book adults are not very different from children. They're just older, and so they have more power—usually, to do harm, usually, to children. Everyone is forlorn; everyone's mother has gone away. So Theresa's newfound sexuality, which—like Stephen Dedalus's in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," that other bildungsroman—gives a boost to her imagination, also adds to the counterweight of grief.

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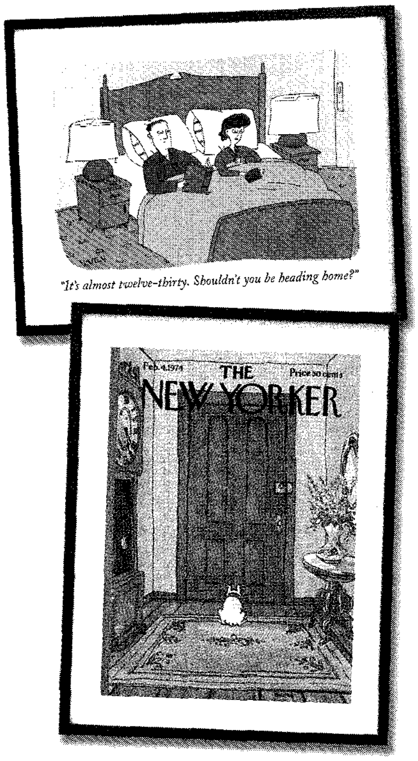
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For a decade now, McDermott has been one of American fiction's preeminent realists. In her first novel, "A Bigamist's Daughter" (1982), she discovered her theme: faith versus time, idealism versus adaptability. In her next three novels—"That Night" (1987), "At Weddings and Wakes" (1992), and "Charming Billy" (1998)—she found her world. The people in these books are Irish-American: the first generation, dying of poverty and homesickness; the second, scarred by their parents' griefs; the third, who go to college and think about their families and serve as McDermott's narrators. This world, based in part on McDermott's own youth, but with noble precedents in literature—"Dubliners," "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"—is very complete. Geographically, it is centered in Brooklyn (poverty) and Queens (respectability), with a branch office in Long Island (summer vacations; your parents having sex for the first time in months). Sociologically, it is subtle and exact. In "Charming Billy," the Billy of the title, who is second-generation, is asked how his family is doing, and he tells of "his sister Rosie's kids (Holy Cross and Katherine Gibbs Queensborough Community and the telephone company) and Kate's kids (Regis Fordham Notre Dame Marymount Chase Manhattan)." There, in less than a sentence, you have the two gradations of embourgeoisement available to the third generation. McDermott—Sacred Heart Academy SUNY-Oswego—is part of that generation. She grew up in Elmont, New York, a bedroom community on Long Island. Her father, like Billy, was a Con Edison representative.

Most of the adults in these novels have too many children, or, if they don't marry, they live with their parents, glum widows and widowers, and resent this. Every family has two or three alcoholics. ("Charming Billy" is a study of alcoholism.) Once McDermott has put all these pieces in place—boiled the potatoes, laid the doilies on the dressers, told us which daughter became a nun, which a secretary, which a drunk—we can sit down and listen to her characters' superficially boring conversations and be thrilled to our bones by them. The smallest

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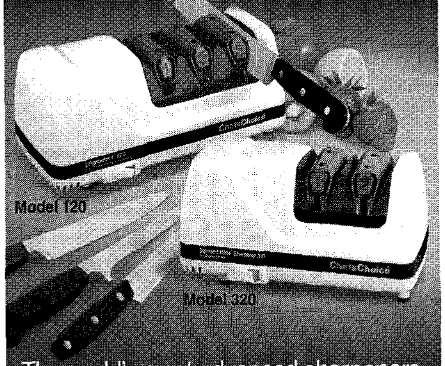

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gesture, the briefest remark, speaks volumes. Manners equal morals, and morals equal spiritual truth.

But artists, once they have mastered something, may get tired of it and throw it away, because they are missing something else, which lies beyond. McDermott had a great and deserved success with realism. "At Weddings and Wakes" was a best-seller. "Charming Billy" was, too, and it won the National Book Award. With "Child of My Heart," however, she has taken a left turn, and headed somewhere new. The book's point of view is not rigorously controlled. (How many fifteen-year-olds have a theory about how to stage "Macbeth"?) History, though present, is only a whisper this time. Social class is still there; McDermott can't do without that. On Theresa's dog-walking rounds, Daisy gets what is apparently her first sighting of household help: " 'A maid?' Daisy whispered, laughing, as if I had said a leprechaun or a centaur." But class, too, is less important here than in the earlier books.

Most crucially, the world of things—the people's clothes, the magazines they read, the flowers they buy, and thereby tell us everything—is no longer there, or not in the same way. We get things, but they don't have fixed meanings, or even fixed form. In an early chapter, Theresa wakes up in her bedroom and looks at the wallpaper. Before, McDermott would have told us about the rest of the room, too—the bureau, the bedspread, the rug—and all of it would have been spot-on and eloquent. But here she limits herself to the wallpaper, with its "fist-sized yellow roses," which, as Theresa looks at them, become "the fist-sized yellow faces of wrinkled babies and grinning gargoyles and startled guardian angels, of choir boys in war paint with open, oval mouths." This kind of transformation will happen again and again. Things burst open, and show you their insides: flowers and fists, jewels and tears, raptures and terrors.

"Child of My Heart" is not just not realism; it's almost not a novel. It's more like a poem or a dream. Theresa obsessively tells us what she did this day and the next, but the narration is just a sort of bass line. The melody is something else. Events are set off not so much by prior events as by images. In the parking lot at the beach, Flora, looking at the rhinestones on Daisy's magic shoes, says, "The babies were crying," and plucks off one of the stones. Soon afterward, the expected death comes, and, as in a dream, it comes without the expected emotions. Theresa tells us about it hastily, quietly, and then turns her attention to another death that happened that summer. One of the Moran children, nine-year-old Petey, was desperate to give Daisy a present. She had said she liked rabbits. At the end of the book, Theresa finds on her doorstep a bundle of newborn rabbits. As we recall, she mentioned this brood earlier, in the first paragraph of the novel. They were not cute: "They were wet and blind, curled up like grubs and wrapped in a kind of gray caul." She doesn't say what happened to them, but we can guess: "Not meant to live, as my parents had told me, being wild things, although I tried for nearly a week to feed them a watery mixture of milk and torn clover."

There's a lot in this book that Theresa tries to feed on milk and torn clover. In the process, she develops a theory of art: that it is an effort to ward off the grief at the heart of life. The effort does not avail. Of the rabbits, Theresa says:

> I knew without asking that this was Petey's gift. . . . Petey, who always used to ask, challenging and pleading at the same time, "Do you like me? Do you like my family?" Who had wept with his fists tight. Who would be plagued all his life by anger and affection, by gifts gone awry . . . by the inevitable, insufferable loss buried like a dark jewel at the heart of every act of love.

By this time, we have heard about another dark jewel. That's what Theresa calls the pain in her gut where her hymen used to be. (She got her wish.) So we are given jewels, not innocence; art, not happiness.

People shouldn't read "Child of My Heart" as their introduction to McDermott. They should read "At Weddings and Wakes" (her masterpiece) or "Charming Billy" (nearly as good) or "That Night" (my sentimental favorite) first. Then they should get the new book, in which this writer, our professor of Irish-American sorrow, has taken a sabbatical, and gone off to howl at the moon. ♦

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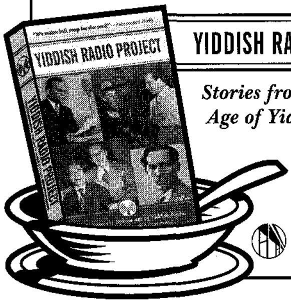

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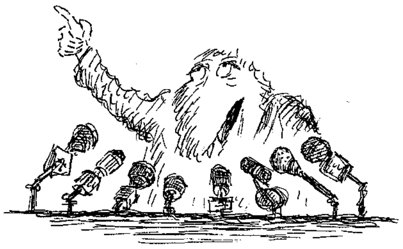
BRIEFLY NOTED

The Winter Queen, *by Jane Stevenson (Houghton Mifflin; $25).* Pelagius—son of an African king, sold into slavery—is bought and then freed by a mad Dutch botanist, who sends him to Leiden to study theology. It's the mid-seventeenth century, and Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, is haggard and mired in debt; ensconced at The Hague, she schemes for the sake of her children and laments her raddled dreams. Stevenson asks us to believe that this unlikely pair not only meet (Pelagius, though a Christian convert, has built up a reputation as a seer, and Elizabeth consults him) but fall in love and secretly marry. That we do, with almost giddy pleasure, is a testament to her astonishing skills. Like the late Penelope Fitzgerald, Stevenson is a meticulous fabulist.

Grass for My Pillow, *by Saiichi Maruya, translated from the Japanese by Dennis Keene (Columbia; $24.50).* This virtuosic novel was published in Japan in 1966. Its antiwar message is timely, but its delayed American appearance is bewildering, for the book is a cornucopia of delights. Its hero, Hamada, a just individual in an unjust society, was a draft dodger during the Second World War, skulking through the country under an assumed identity, repairing clocks and radios and selling sand paintings. Now middle-aged, with a young wife, he has settled into the dubious comforts of postwar prosperity as a clerk at a conservative university, but his past is catching up with him, and the stultifying pettiness of his workplace is interrupted by flashbacks of his life as a fugitive. He is complicatedly compromised; so is everyone around him, and the inescapably mixed nature of the characters' motives is delineated with wit, economy, and a consistent but ever-surprising compassion. Keene's translation dexterously reflects Maruya's linguistic exuberance.



Paradise Alley, *by Kevin Baker (HarperCollins; $26.95).* This follow-up to "Dreamland," Baker's 1999 novel about Coney Island, is both an example of his talents as a historian and, occasionally, a warning about the power of facts to upend the delicate balance of fiction. With painstaking accuracy, the author re-creates the 1863 Draft Riots, in which President Lincoln's announcement of a new conscription law provoked thousands of New Yorkers, primarily Irish immigrants, to rampage through the city, looting and murdering. The principal characters, a trio of working-class women, furnish a rich domestic perspective that complements the public record. Unfortunately, Baker's liberal use of other voices—including those of a reporter, a thug, and a fireman—ultimately proves distracting.

I Don't Know How She Does It, *by Allison Pearson (Knopf; $23).* This novel about the roller-coaster ride of modern motherhood brings its thrills and travails into such terrifying focus that it's practically an IMAX experience, with Lego, Disney videos, and corporate e-mails flying at you from all directions. It opens at 1 A.M. in the kitchen of thirty-five-year-old Kate Reddy, hedge-fund manager and mother of two, who is hitting Sainsbury mince pies with a rolling pin so that they can pass for home-made at her daughter's school: "Now we can manage the orgasms, but we have to fake the mince pies. And they call this progress." The novel's title refers to a remark frequently made by Kate's smug stay-at-home contemporaries, usually right after they've asked when she's switching to part-time. But how long, in fact, *will* Kate be able to do it—the sleepless nights, the piggish colleagues, the censorious in-laws, the text message from the nanny, received mid-meeting, informing her that she may have lice? Pearson provides a suspenseful and entertaining answer to this question, but along the way she asks some equally tricky ones about the way we live now.

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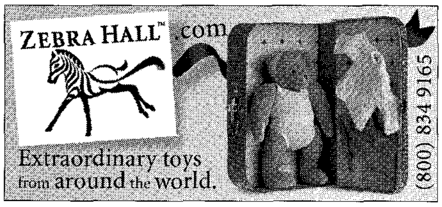

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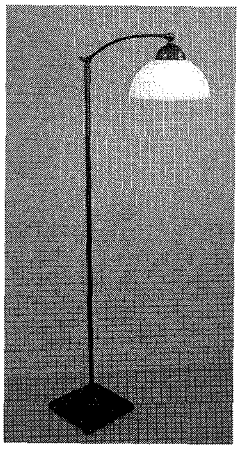

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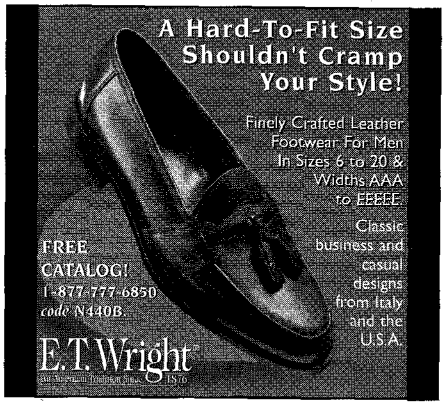

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BOOKS

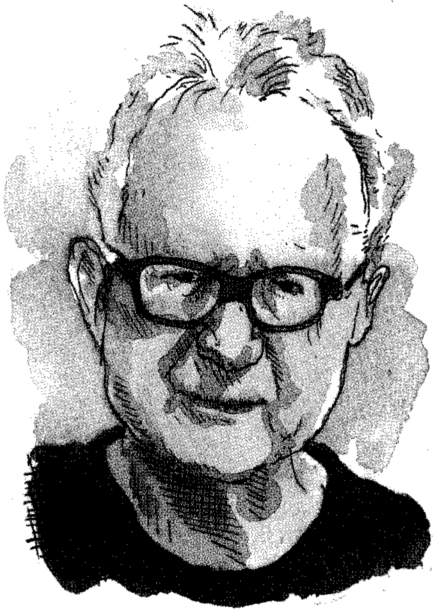
RED LOVES REX, ALAS

A new novel by Frederic Tuten.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Once upon a time—in 1971, if you must know—I read a slender book that seemed to me original, droll, and mysteriously precious. Wrapped in a posterish Roy Lichtenstein dust jacket, and set in narrow-measure boldface sans serif, Frederic Tuten's "The Adventures of Mao on the Long March" was a deadpan amalgam of quotation, parody, history, and fanciful fiction whose central image is that of Mao Tse-tung as a keen fan of Godard films and Minimal art, a Pateresque aesthete with a billion people on his hands. In an age when Mao posters adorned college dorms and Donald Barthelme ruled the nouvelle vague of fiction, the book made more sense than you might think; crediting a totalitarian icon with a thoroughly hip American mentality was wishful thinking of a merciful sort during the grim dénouement of our intervention in Vietnam. "The Adventures of Mao" had Barthelme's bold surrealism without his personal quality, his short stories' effect of being coded private reports from the front lines of city and, specifically, Village life. With all its bland absurdity, Tuten's book took a lofty tone; it was a collage of his soul's contents, where militant socialism and languid aestheticism coexisted in peaceful stalemate.

When I recently tried to find the volume, in the safe niche within my diffuse and uncatalogued holdings where I imagined I had cached it, it had vanished. Perhaps this is fitting, since after 1971 the author, too, rather vanished. Where has he been? Earning a living, of course, with Guggenheim grants and teaching stints—a number of years in Paris, countless years as director of the Graduate Program in Literature and Creative Writing at City College in New York. A loyal band of fellow-Manhattanites (Susan Sontag, Joseph McElroy, Jerome Charyn, Walter Mosley) provided warm endorsements for the three titles that Tuten turned out in three decades: "Tallien: A Brief Romance" (1988), "Tintin in the New World: A Romance" (1993), and "Van Gogh's Bad Café: A Love Story" (1997). All are pastiches of a sort. The first, addressed to the author's dead father, a "renegade Baptist and radical," tells in accents both orotund and colloquial the true story of Jean-Lambert Tallien, a French revolutionary who led the attack on Robespierre and survived the Terror, dying miserably in 1820. The second, in an irresistibly comic diction imitating, one assumes, the French, follows the adolescent detective Tintin, with his faithful dog Snowy and his crusty sidekick Captain Haddock, to Peru, where the major characters from Thomas Mann's "The Magic Mountain" have assembled. The third is a short but turgid pipe dream conflating the narrator's seedy, soggy times in the East Village with Van Gogh's crazy last days in Auvers-sur-Oise; his favorite dive, the Bad Café, translates as Mousey's Bar on Av-



Frederic Tuten

BARRY BLITT

enue C. Tuten's protagonists fall in love, which weakens their altruistic vocations. Political idealism, wistful aestheticism, counterproductive obsessive love, Francophilia, red hair, gemlike flames, a borrowed voice: all these ingredients are present, though more lugubriously, in his new novel, "The Green Hour" (Norton; $24.95).

The book is his most conventional. It features a heroine with the upscale name of Dominique, who moves through clouds of academic, New Lefty glamour. She is an art historian, teaching at a New York City university, who has survived one bout of cancer and its treatment but is permanently afflicted with love for a high-minded drifter called Rex. Rex, as it happens, is the name Tuten gave his father in "Tallien," and, like that Rex, this one dabbles in social activism, intermittently organizing the world's laborers into unions and strikes. His main activity, though, seems to be tormenting Dominique by reappearing in her life when it suits him and disappearing whenever she settles into a contented dependency. Their most sustained cohabitation comes in the working-class Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, where they live above a café whose green illumination gives the apartment the tint of the novel's title:

> "The green hour," she said, "*l'heure verte*, called so because in the early evening everyone in Paris went to the cafés to drown themselves in milky green absinthe. Did you know that, Rex?"
>
> "Sort of, Red."

That's the way he talks. He calls her Red, though he has red hair also. He is not very giving, but she loves him. It is easier to fathom why Marcel adores Albertine and Hans Castorp pines for Clavdia Chauchat than to wrap one's mind around this particular overestimation of the love object. They are not alone in the blissful green interval; Rex has a son, Kenji, the fruit of a brief entanglement with a rich Japanese radical who is not into, as they used to say, motherhood. Meanwhile, Dominique, whom no man can resist, is keeping on her string a super-rich American, Eric, which is also the name, in "Tallien," of a Bronx Communist so devoted that he asphyxiates himself after Khrushchev denounces Stalin. The newer model Eric is an avid capitalist and far from suicidal, though his patient courtship of Dominique while she moons, year after year, over the mostly absentee Rex does smack of masochism. As she approaches fifty, she shifts her mooning to Kenji, who has evidently been kidnapped by his indifferent mother's powerful family. The child, at the age of five, shows a gift for sententious utterance as allegedly enchanting as his father's, "pronouncements saved from the oracular and pompous by the unassuming manner of his delivery." One of his babysitters puts it, "*Il est très philosophe.*" A sample Kenjiism: "The world is the world," he explains, in declining the facetious offer of a newspaper. When he and his mother visit the Louvre and view the paintings by her pet, Poussin, they enjoy this exchange:

> "They are beautiful, Mama," he said. Adding, "But I do not like them."
>
> "Really," she said. "And why, my little wise man?"
>
> "*Elles sont tellement mortes, Mama*," he said. "They are really dead."

Tuten in his other novels showed a flair for an adopted voice, especially in the stately but festive rhythms of "Tintin in the New World." But in "The Green Hour" his style has a stilted, airless quality, as if he were parodying something without quite realizing it. He does realize it, at moments, but goes on anyway:

> They drank champagne, she and Claude, as lovers were supposed to do; they screwed on the bed and on the floor, they walked along gray beach and looked out on gray sea—as had other couples in every middling French movie—while the November mists chilled them and returned them to bed. He actually said "O *là là*" when he came.

Cinema underlies Red's romantic life—"He always liked it when she did the hardboiled routine; very American, like the noir movies he loved, where the waitress called the police detective 'bub' or just plain 'mister' "—and Hemingway sponsors a lusty string of "and"s: "Their being healthy and sexy and smart and in Paris in the spring and in the park reading and knowing they would eventually go back to the hotel and to their soft white wide bed." At

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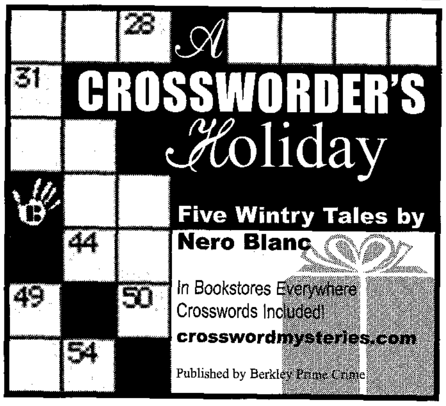

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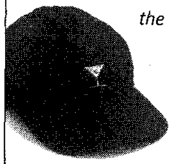

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the same time, a quaint and solemn diction of sentiment drains the tale of hard-boiled fun:

> He had held back cautiously for three years and not only from professional scruples or even from his knowing that she was already and deeply absorbed in another person but from the fear that he would spoil their ever deepening friendship and ruin his—their—chances for love.

Wallow where you will: on a single page we get "love's dramas and screams which were born in the deepest tissue of the self" and "She was the wet material that had fallen from the archaic sky in an explosion of atoms crashing and merging in the silent blackness." Tuten's vocabulary, coolly equal to ironic occasions, is tugged awry by the stresses of his love story: the heroine submits to intercourse with her "hinds" (hindquarters?) "in the air" and takes satisfaction in "the surety" (sureness? certainty?) "of her feelings"; an admirer wears "an expression so tender of [sic] her that she impulsively kissed his cheek," a prepositional vagary as startling as "too many asides into the deeper realm of her feelings." Pseudo-nouns ("Kenji's vanishment," "a day of museuming") vie with bizarrely stretched verbs as in "leaves did not molt the page" (molt onto?) and the suddenly agronomic "Didn't he yet realize that modern capitalism was the new socialism, limed with fresh thoughts and new hopes?" Not that Tuten or any other writer with a slant to share need knuckle under to every copy editors' quibble, but this prose feels floridly and hastily translated from another language—the language of film.

It is in the movies that obsessed and doomed love still, with a brave little smile, reigns, and the super-rich, a bottomless reservoir of improbabilities, finance abductions and underwrite, for unrequited love of a lady, such quixotic ventures as Rex's manufacture of one-of-a-kind, tailored-for-you bicycles. Dominique treats Eric like an unaudited expense account: "Now that she had returned, however temporarily, to his orbit, [he] facilitated her eventual repatriation—shipping, storage, plane tickets, and taxi to her apartment included." Not just she but the novel's world seems exempted from earthy consequences, suspended in a cocoon woven entirely of cultural allusions. While it would be extreme to suggest that Tuten has no taste for life unless it is mediated by culture, his art is freed into its natural gaiety and nimbleness by the intercession of figments—Mao, Tintin, Van Gogh, characters from "The Magic Mountain," the stylized participants in the French Revolution. "The Green Hour" has no such figment, though it is haunted by dead painters and traditional gestures of glamour. As in an old-time Hollywood or contemporary French movie, there is a lot of reckless smoking, with careful brand identification: Lucky Strikes, "Delicados, the sweetish Mexican cigarettes which he smoked one after the other in the darkness of their bed," Gitanes and "Gauloise yellow," and back home to Camels, all onscreen without a kickback. As in a movie, every place the lovers visit is photogenic, from "Tangiers, where they stayed at the floppy old Hôtel Villa de France, in the room where—it was said—Matisse had lived, painting the trees and archway to the market beneath his window," to Rex's last crash pad, "a drab room with wonderfully rich bookcases" in New Mexico, where "a huge bouquet of dried red peppers hung from a beam above the table" competes visually with "a large and deep stone fireplace flanked by windows almost the room's height and facing mountains and sky." The word "elegant" occurs on page 1 and keeps recurring. Marxist aesthetes, or aesthetic Marxists, know how to pose for *Architectural Digest*, however unhappily in love or perennially out of work. Radical swank still works in the movies—something about its high cheekbones—but in novels it begins to look callow. There we expect illusions to be, if halfheartedly, penetrated.

Tuten's invincibly attractive, though cancerous, heroine does penetrate to a certain recognition of herself as poor faithful Echo in the Poussin painting of Echo and Narcissus (reproduced as a frontispiece), and claims to be "exhausted with herself"—"The hotel was tired with its stale tradition and tired carpets, and she was tired of her own story and its chronic repetitions." But this reader could not quite believe her final haven of repose—a Montauk castle and cave like something out of "Dr. No," with classier wall candy—or quite forgive her for putting us through two hundred and fifty pages of vacillating, unconsciously arrogant infatuation. ◆

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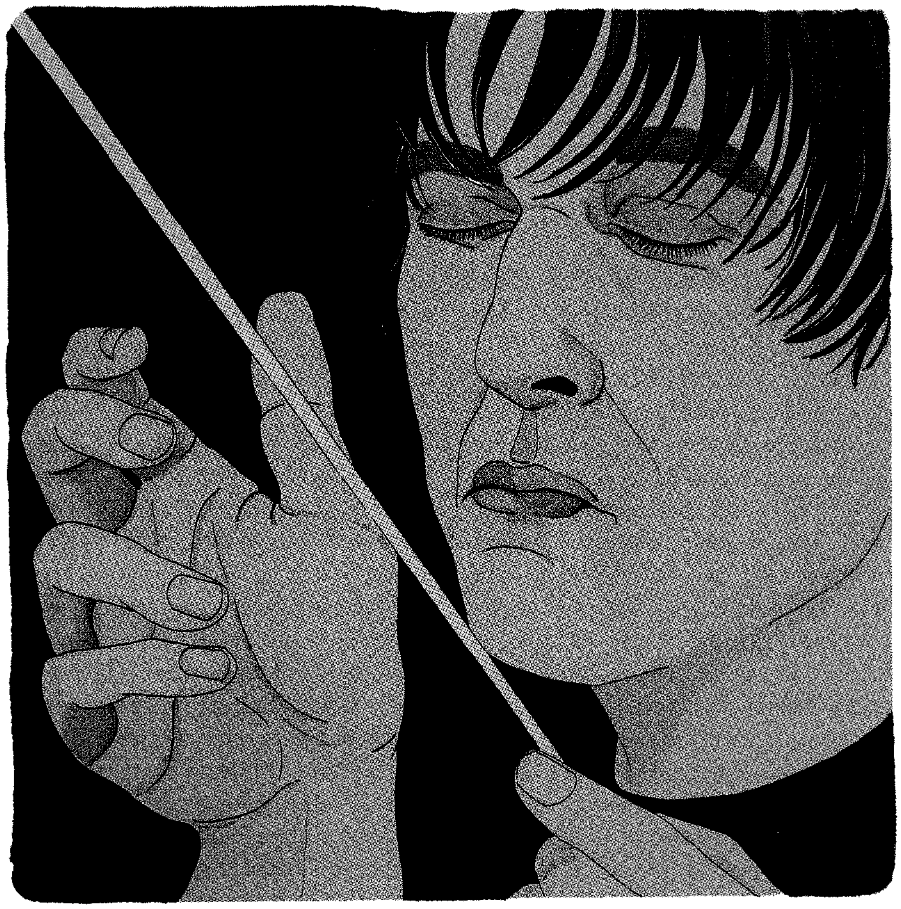
BY ALEX ROSS



Pappano defines his job as providing new focus for a broad community of artists.

LARA TOMLIN

English audiences produce an unmistakable noise at the end of a great night of theatre—a revved-up, rapid-fire applause that is almost caffeinating in its effect. That noise erupted after a recent performance of Alban Berg's "Wozzeck" at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, and it was a welcome sound, since England's leading opera company has too long been known as the place where everything goes wrong. In the nineties, as the rest of London enjoyed a cultural renaissance, Covent Garden dwelled in a state of chaos, each new cultural or bureaucratic horror sprayed across the morning papers. Executives came and went; productions were cancelled or curtailed on short notice; extensive renovations sucked up millions of pounds of public money; Labour politicians self-servingly denounced the house on behalf of the working class; and the London tabloids mocked the entire spectacle ("The Greedy Beggar's Opera," the *Sun* dubbed it). Several ugly backstage scenes, complete with screaming, swearing, and the hurling of a telephone, were broadcast to the nation via a merciless television documentary entitled "The House." At one point, it seemed possible that the Royal Opera and Ballet would simply go under.

This season, Covent Garden is a happier and healthier place. The critics are full of praise, and the tabloids have let up on their needling. The solution, oddly simple on the face of it, was to hire a powerful artistic personality around whom the company's energies could coalesce. The new music director, Antonio Pappano, is one of the best all-around conductors of opera now working; unless the byzantine management structure makes a victim of him, he ought to have a long and happy reign. The house that rode so high under Georg Solti's direction in the nineteen-sixties once again has the swagger of success.

Pappano is forty-two years old; he was born in London and spent much of his youth in Connecticut. He got his start as a rehearsal coach at the New York City Opera but soon moved to European stages, gaining precious hands-on experience in Frankfurt. From 1992 until this year, he was the music director of the perennially adventurous Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie, in Brussels. He has a pleasant, soft-featured face and speaks in a flat-toned American accent that can only be described as pure Washington, D.C. Padding around Covent Garden in slacks and a green Lacoste shirt, he has no air of grandiloquence about him. He even seems a little bland. But when he speaks about his plans for Covent Garden he assumes the air of someone who has decided what he wants and has no time to argue.

"My job is to be a point of focus for this incredible community of artists and art-minded people," he told me, in his not yet fully furbished Covent Garden office. "They need to funnel all their talents in one direction, rather than in twenty directions at once. This is what Covent Garden has lacked in the recent past. All that infighting you read about was just filling a vacuum. At the same time, my job is to provide flash points for the audience—dramatic moments where the music and the image come together as one. I'd like to work with directors who challenge clichés without going to conceptual extremes."

The new "Wozzeck," directed by Keith Warner, with sets designed by Stefanos Lazaridis, was a model display of Pappano's philosophy. Purists could advance any number of criticisms of this wholesale revision of Berg's opera, in which an unlucky soldier is driven insane by military discipline and medical experiments. At the start of Warner's scenario, Wozzeck is already cooped up in a gruesome white-walled asylum, and it seems as though he is telling his story in flashback. The images are vague and disorienting, but they strike home in uncanny

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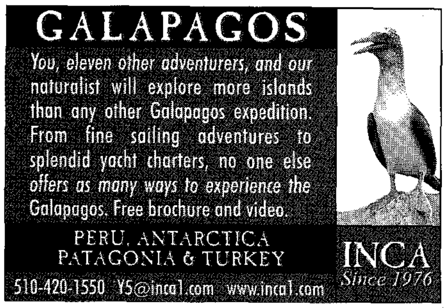
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ways. We see an assortment of objects—models of houses, mushrooms, other nameless organic matter—sealed up in Damien Hirst-like glass tanks. One of them contains nothing but water. When Wozzeck kills his wife, Marie, holding her over the tank, the water turns red. Then, at the moment where the libretto calls for him to drown in a river, Wozzeck climbs into the tank and submerges himself entirely. The baritone Matthias Goerne gave a terrifyingly believable performance; he made himself a baffled, agitated hulk of a man, his limbs going every which way as if they had minds of their own. Katarina Dalayman sang Marie in grand lyrical paragraphs, like a creature of Wozzeck's better dreams. The mostly English supporting cast, including Graham Clark, Eric Halfvarson, and Kim Begley, were an excellent gallery of grotesques.

The orchestra's playing was extraordinarily clear. It made expressive points in quick bursts, without ever overwhelming the singers. Some passages were a little scrappy, suffering in comparison with the voluptuous detail that James Levine brings to this score at the Met. The huge crescendo on a single note in Act III, for example, was something less than a perfectly balanced pillar of sound. Then again, Warner's production did not highlight the moment, so no big effect was called for. It struck me, in this passage, that Pappano was conducting with his eyes on the stage, tailoring his phrases to suit the action. His hair-raisingly vehement conducting of the final D-minor interlude clinched the production's climactic coup de théâtre, in which bright lights bore down clinically on the floating body in the tank. (The audience could see that Goerne was breathing through a plastic tube, which somehow made the image all the more disturbing.) The idea of shaping the music to fit the action may not seem like much of a breakthrough, but in the modern opera world, where orchestra and conductor too often inhabit an impeccable but irrelevant world of their own, it is a minor revolution.

Covent Garden still has a long way to go before it fulfills the dreams that were vested in it back in 1945. At that time, a group of highly placed intellectuals, led by John Maynard Keynes, envisioned the Royal Opera and Ballet as the crowning glories of a national arts program. "Let every part of Merrie England be merry in its own way," Keynes proclaimed, adding, for effect, "Death to Hollywood." Institutions, he said, should instill confidence in the country's artists and give them every opportunity. Yet the Royal Opera has a very erratic track record with regard to English composers. In the early postwar years, when Benjamin Britten gave the house two masterpieces, "Billy Budd" and "Gloriana," he encountered a wall of indifference, and took his genius elsewhere. After that, premières were sporadic and often ill conceived. Covent Garden can redress the wrong by reaching out now to England's brilliant contemporary talents, and it has in fact sent one or two positive signals. This December, it will give the première of Nicholas Maw's "Sophie's Choice," and in 2004 it will present "The Tempest," an opera by Thomas Adès. Perplexingly, however, the conductor Lorin Maazel has been asked to write a work based on Orwell's "1984." English composers are scratching their heads over that.

There is still some debate over the relationship between Covent Garden and Her Majesty's Government, which supplies about a third of the budget. Tony Blair's culture mavens have tried to score political points by distancing themselves from so-called "élite" arts. But was their Millennium Dome really a better use of the people's money? Some critics want the Royal Opera to get out of politics altogether and convert to what they call the "American system," where all funds come from donors and subscribers. Perhaps if these pundits had to sit through the Metropolitan Opera's fifteenth "La Bohème" of the season, with a new Mimi fresh off the plane from Sydney, they would have second thoughts. (America doesn't have a "system"; it has grim reality.) If, on the other hand, Covent Garden is to retain official status, it will have to discard its air of lordly entitlement and appeal to a larger cross-section of the public. The only way to bring in new fans is to lower ticket prices; paradoxically, it cannot do this without more government support. To this end, the new "Wozzeck" was a promising test run for a future pricing scheme, with the top tickets set at fifty pounds. On the second night of the run, there were no empty seats. ♦

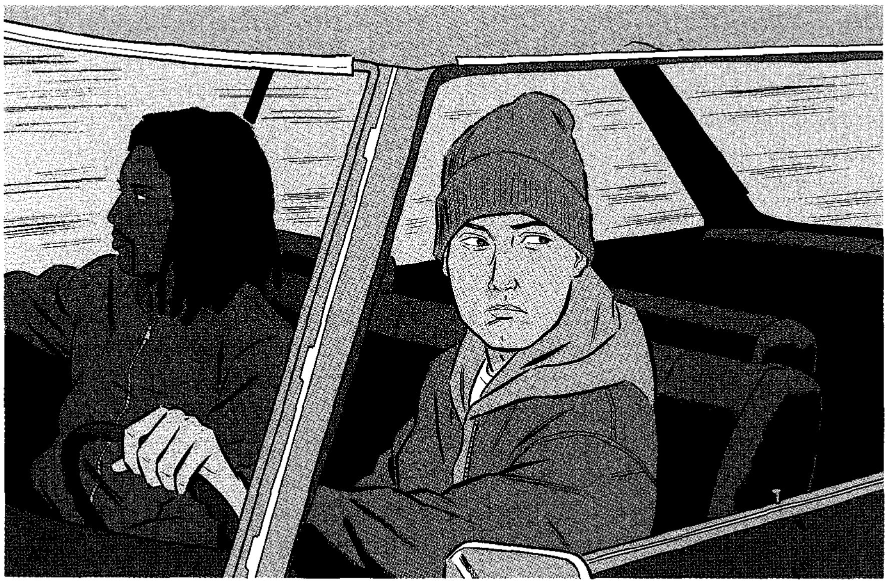
THE CURRENT CINEMA

BREAKING THROUGH

"8 Mile" and "Frida."

BY DAVID DENBY

In Eminem's first movie, "8 Mile," the white rap star is hooded in about five different ways at once: There's a Nike knit cap on his head and, above that, the top of a maroon sweatshirt. His eyelids are partly lowered, his ears are covered with headphones, his body is sheathed in loose-fitting sweats. You can't see much of him, and what's visible is guarded and hostile—his upper lip has a mean double curl, a natural snarl. As a camera subject, Eminem is resistant material—he has the general aspect of a walking hard-on—but he's fascinating, too, and his way of withholding himself is both a natural reflex and a method of teasing and dominating everyone else. His trick is to turn self-effacement into a weapon. When he breaks out with his stiletto voice in profane lyrics with charged interior rhymes, the rapping has a malign power, and he stays on top of the beat. He's very fast, the way Sugar Ray Robinson was fast in the ring. Like the fighting in "Rocky" and the dancing in "Saturday Night Fever," the rap songs in "8 Mile" possess a redemptive power. They release intolerable feelings of disgust, the fear of remaining a loser forever.


Mekhi Phifer and Eminem in Curtis Hanson's new movie.

ADRIAN TOMINE

It's a relief to see Eminem give up the preening megalomania of his last album, "The Eminem Show," in which he seemed inordinately impressed with the size of his fame—that is, the threat that his success represented to the parents, powers, and principalities of America. In "8 Mile," Lynne Cheney is not the enemy—at least, not explicitly. Eminem lays off the "bitches," too, and mostly gives the "faggots" a rest. He doesn't threaten to "kill" everyone in sight. He's gone back to his roots, or at least a mythicized version of his roots.

Eminem, born Marshall Mathers III, plays Jimmy Smith, Jr., known as Rabbit. The time is 1995, and Jimmy lives with his blowsy, feckless mother (Kim Basinger) in a trailer park in Detroit, well within 8 Mile Road, the perimeter that divides the inner city from Detroit's affluent white suburbs. He works in a metal-pressing plant, but his real life is spent with friends—his crew, mainly black, who serve as his supporters, jesters, and stooges. Meeting on some ragged street, the men clasp hands and gently

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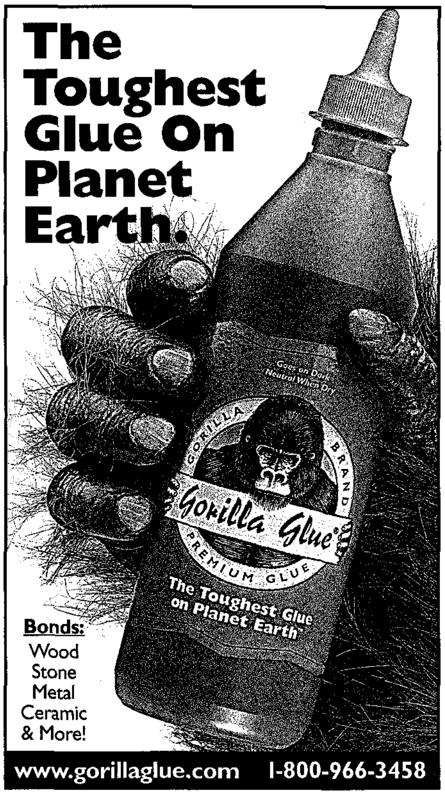
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touch their right shoulders, leaning forward like stately birds in some preordained ritual. Jimmy is the best rapper, and no one in his crew challenges him as leader. On Saturday nights, at an old club, the Shelter, he goes up against the rap leaders of other gangs, all black. It's a scene that dates back at least as far as the street-corner tradition of "playing the dozens," staged as gladitorial combat. First one man raps, and the victim stares back without flinching (the stare is both offense and defense). Then the second one goes at it, picking up material from the attack and "flipping" it. The goal is to be as low-down, personal, and wounding as possible. Yet nuance and virtuosity matter. You can't simply slam or curse your way to success; you have to be smart and funny, and the audience chooses the winner.

Curtis Hanson ("L.A. Confidential," "Wonder Boys"), working from a script by Scott Silver, uses a handheld camera for the musical numbers. But Hanson doesn't whip the movie up like a music video. He lays out the narrative and the character relationships methodically, even slowly; "8 Mile" has some quiet sequences, and some measure, which is an unconventional quality to bring to a rap movie. The filmmakers (Brian Grazer initiated the project and produced it) have got their hands on the biggest pop phenomenon since Madonna, and they are determined to engage the emotions of a large, mixed-race audience. My guess is that they will. This nasty-faced genius-punk is hurting all the time but doesn't ask for anything. He's suffering, cut off—a recessive champ who cares for his tiny little sister more than anyone else. He trains constantly, writing down rhymes on dirty sheets of paper, with nothing but a beat playing in his ear. In the tradition of "Rocky" and "Fever," the movie is a shrewdly engineered piece of proletarian pop—a story of triumph—but, like Eminem's enraged lyrics, "8 Mile" has its own kind of vile candor. The great Mexican cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto ("Amores Perros") keeps the visual palette ugly and raw—gray skies, damp streets, dank factories, graffiti-covered buildings. "8 Mile" is about *Detroitismo* in all its misery of sunken hopes and defiance. The movie says, "Out of this junk, out of the self-hatred and anger that grow from living amid junk, rappers will make their art." There is an effective sequence in which a female worker at Jimmy's plant takes a soggy sandwich off a lunch cart, begins rapping in complaint, a man tops her, and Jimmy, hanging on the fringes, charges into the group and tops the topper. Authenticity and spontaneity joined together—that's the claim made for rap as art. That large amounts of rap, white and black, may actually be calculated to please fourteen-year-old boys in Scarsdale is not even hinted at in "8 Mile." Yet the movie is not quite naïve. Jimmy spends a lot of time seeking the "deal," the "demo" that will liberate him, and he wants to know who his true friend is—that is, which one of his circle will promote his talent. Nothing else really matters to him.

He has a lot in common with the young black men around him. He lives at home with his mother, as they do, he has a lousy job, he speaks like them, raps like them. There's a good deal of shoving back and forth along racial lines in the movie, and at one point Jimmy stoically accepts a beating from a black gang. But the male relationships unfold with an intimacy and ease that go way beyond the coy teasing in "48 HRS." and "Men in Black." People who are convinced that Eminem is destroying America might want to consider the delicacy of the white-black friendships in "8 Mile." (Perhaps the spectre of such friendships is what right-wingers actually hate most.) Race is an issue, but it's not the most important issue. The universal appreciation of talent matters more. When Jimmy breaks out, the black audience at the Shelter gives him his due, just as black listeners have given Eminem his due as a grownup rapper. Fair is fair: the man can do it.

In the end, Jimmy is a winner who is still hooded and distant. He stares at women the same way he stares at his

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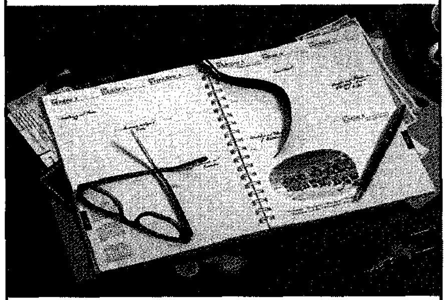

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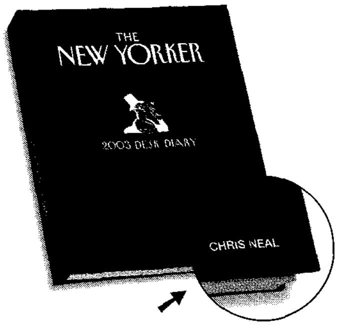

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enemies; in effect, women *are* his enemies. A bright-eyed little mover (Brittany Murphy) who wants to be a model believes in Jimmy, but she immediately betrays her guy, as the girls always do in Eminem's world. In any case, he's not interested. The master myth here may be derived less from pop culture than from "Henry IV, Part I." Jimmy is Prince Hal, a king in waiting, roistering among low company, a brawler who will eventually show his true colors. He rejects many of his friends—the movie ends in a series of renunciations—because he's headed for better things. Eminem does not come off as a megalomaniac in "8 Mile," but he expects people to be very, very impressed. I doubt he could lend himself to a fiction that said anything else: his eyes couldn't tell any story but his own. Despite the friendships, he is always alone, and at the end of the movie he walks down a rotting alley toward the still lonelier road of fame.

"8 Mile" wisely covers only a few weeks in time. But Julie Taymor's "Frida" covers a span of thirty years, and it includes as its subjects left-wing politics and the nature of marriage as well as the life of an artist. At the center of the movie is the relationship, always described as "tempestuous," between the great Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (Alfred Molina) and the talented painter Frida Kahlo (Salma Hayek). I have to admit that after an hour or so of this Punch-and-Judy show, with its noisy drinking, hurling of brightly painted kitchen items, partings and reconciliations, I was ready to knock both lovers flat with a large red chili pepper. Still, given its ramshackle construction and its repetitions, "Frida" is much better than it has any right to be. The movie has a rambunctious spirit and a liberated sense of color—an appreciation of the raw, strong Mexican folk tradition that gave both artists their special juice. Taymor and the gaggle of screenwriters who worked on the movie are much too shrewd to accept the sentimental feminist view that Kahlo was Rivera's victim. Smart, willful, and perverse, this Frida is nobody's servant, and the tiny Hayek plays her with head held high. You may want to laugh now and then, but you won't look away. ♦

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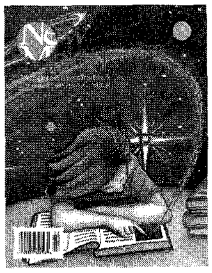

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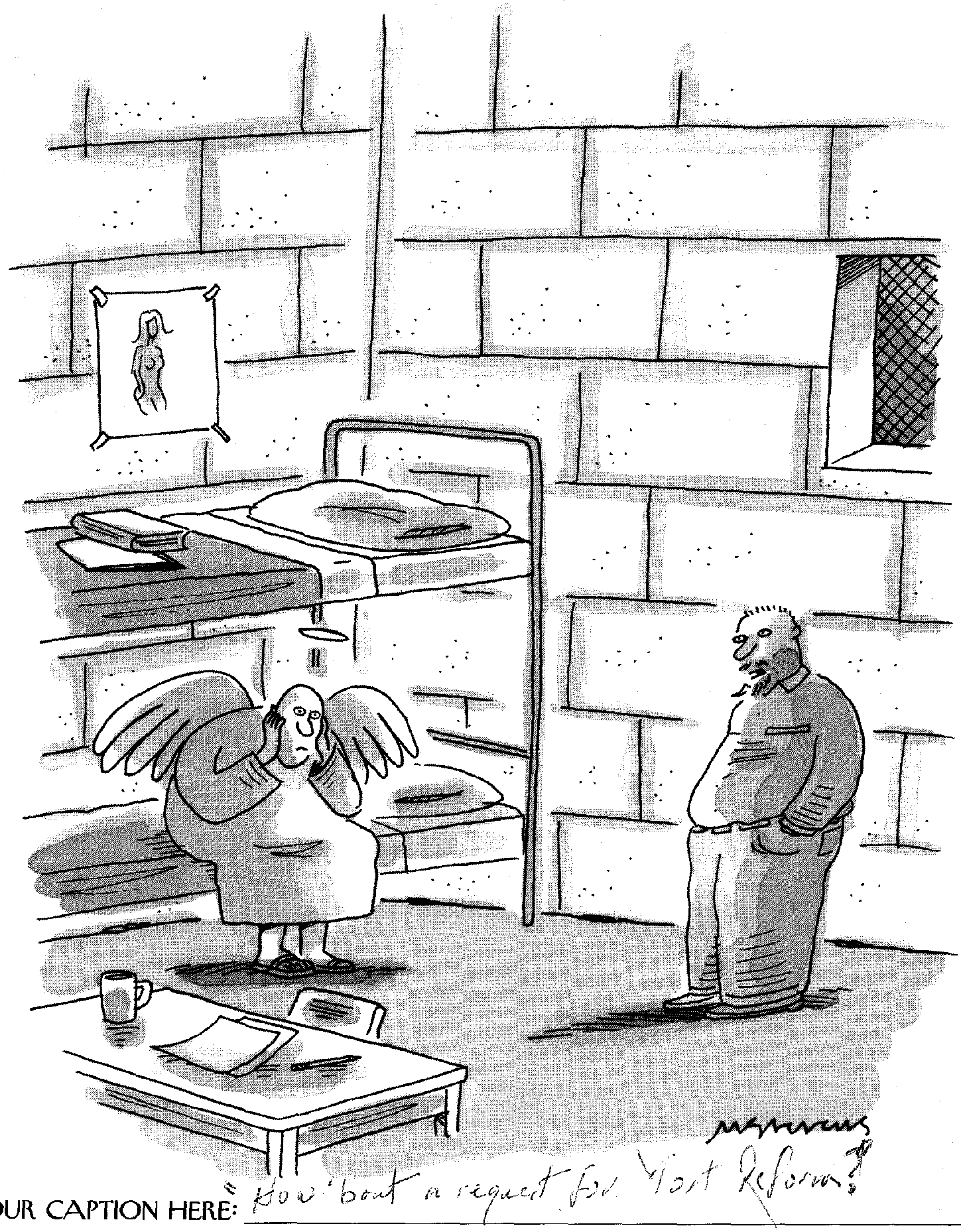

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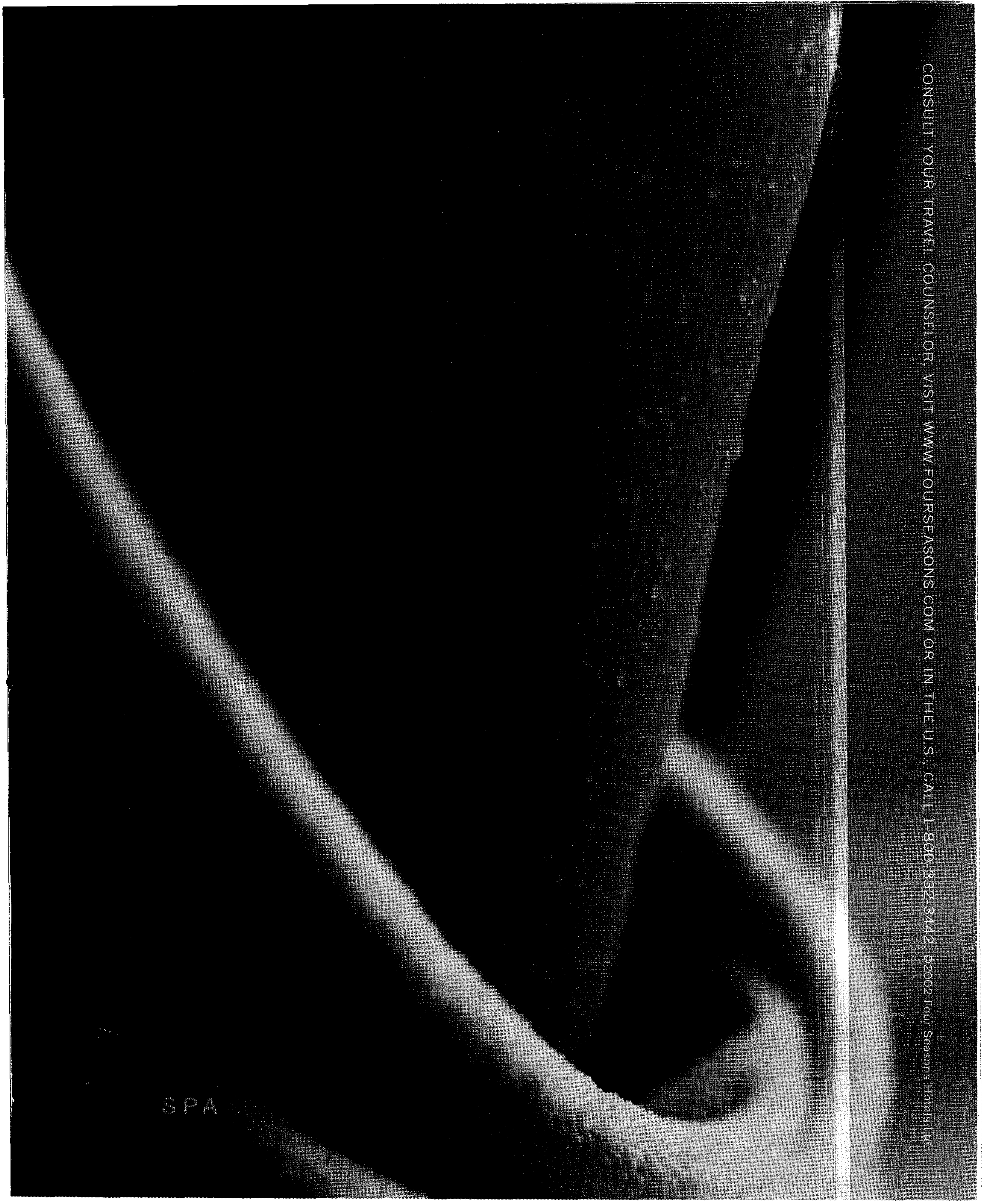

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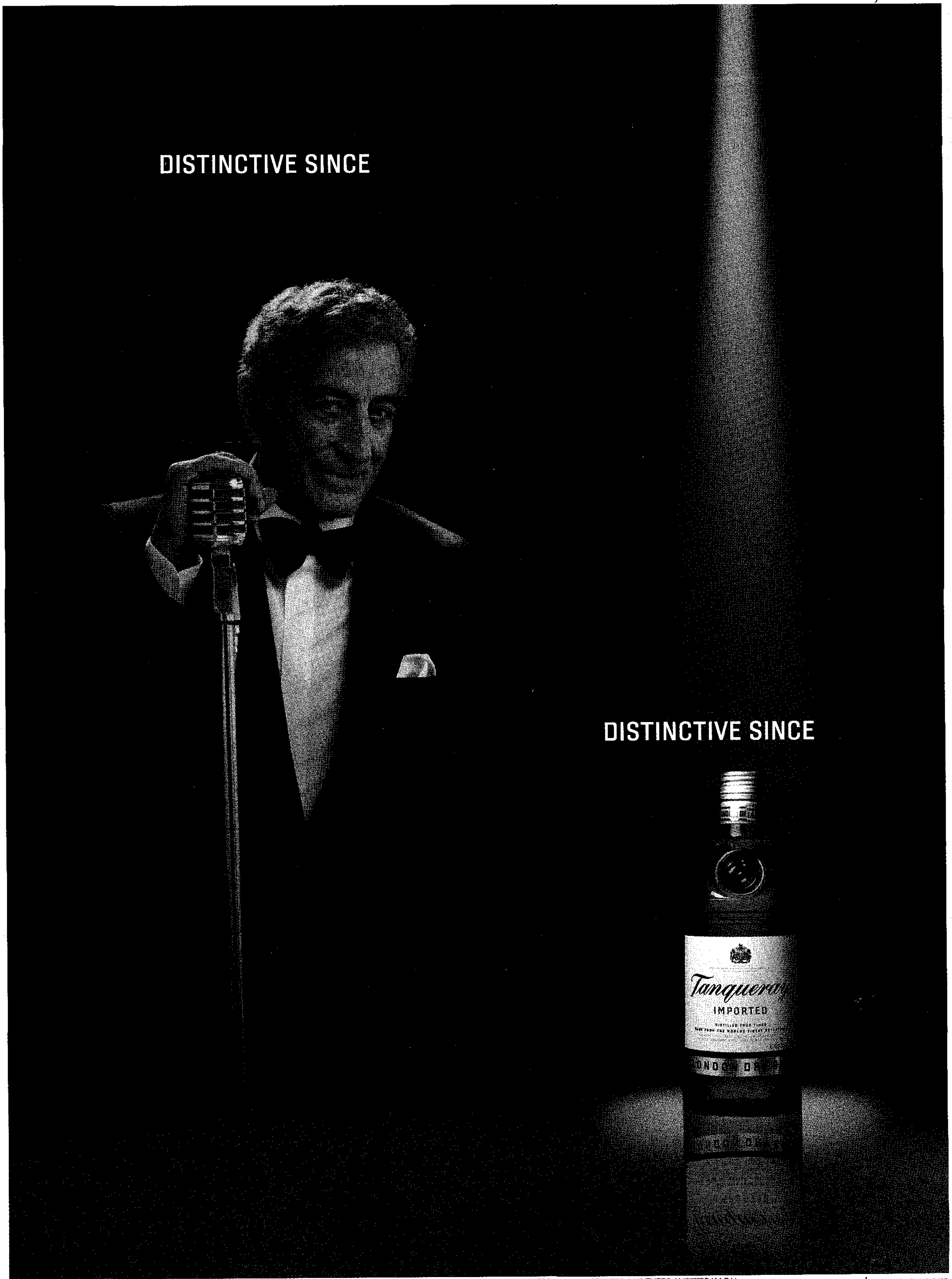
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